

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

THE POET & THE PHILOSOPHER

DR. SURENDRANATH DASGUPTA

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VOL. I

By

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PREFACE

The present writer had the advantage of enjoying the personal friendship of the poet since 1910 when he was a young professor in one of the Colleges of Bengal. Since then the same relation grew and deepened with age till the last days of the poet. He had an advantage of knowing the poet in the familiar surroundings of the poet's school at Santiniketan and of receiving his kind hospitality and of reciprocating it.

Some years ago while the poet was still living, an appreciation and review of his important poetical works was published by the present author in a Bengali work called the *Ravi-dipita*, which received a warm approval at the hands of the poet. After the death of the poet it was suggested to the present writer that a work in English appraising the value of the poet's literary and other thoughts, in English, would be useful, nay, beneficial to those who are interested in the thoughts of Tagore all over the world. Tagore and Gandhi are the two figures of world-eminence whose thoughts and ideals shine in the present world of turbulence and turmoil as two light-houses to guide the destinies of the ship-wrecked humanity.

The present volume deals principally with the important poetical works of Tagore. It tries to discover a synthetic relation between the earlier and later writings of the poet. It tries to show how one may have a perspective of the inner development of the poet's mind as an organic whole in response to the various subjective and objective experiences. His mind was superbly sensitive to every delicate emotion and his capacious intellect was always weaving new creations and interpretations of facts and their relations. He was a poet, a musician, a thinker, an educationist, an adept in all kinds of histrionic arts and also a painter. He was a true patriot and the sorrow and sympathy for his down-trodden country filled him with such subtle pangs of which the ordinary patriot, who is only busy with the solution of bread and butter problem, would have hardly any notion. His faith in God as he understood Him and his devotion to humanity and the great and noble traditions of the culture of his own country gave a holy elegance to his thoughts which is seldom to be witnessed elsewhere.

The writer's instinct was so dominant in him that he could hardly find any rest or peace unless he had expressed all that he had thought or intuited. The urge of expression so over-powered him that he would, with great pleasure, undergo the labour of training young men and women for the display of a piece of drama of his,

revising the songs, tunes and every detail of the dance, the costume, the recitation and the acting and the dramatic performance as a whole. He had but a few hours of sleep and was capable of infinite industry. He was fond of correcting his own poems in order to bring them to perfection. He was an artist who guarded with vigilance the surge of his own thoughts and emotions and controlled the channels of their expression with great care. His scrupulousness in the matter of the expression of his own ideas was so great that he seldom used any amanuensis. He had almost an ideal hand-writing which was often imitated by the young men of Bengal. He enjoyed writing in his own hand. He had a large correspondence. Some of his correspondents were young children of 10 or 12, some were young and old ladies who would probably want a song or a poem for a birthday or marriage-celebration or want some advice from him on their personal matter. His humanity was so large that nothing was too trifling for him. He would reply and concede to the requests of all his correspondents and write all the letters in his own hand almost immediately. Almost everyone had an access to him without any appointment. He would leave his pen and talk with his visitors almost as long as they wished, and then carry on his work again.

His religious sermons delivered at Santiniketan were short, un-dogmatic, critical and analytic. They are almost unparalleled in any literature. I do not know if any of them has been translated into English or any other modern European language. His political essays may be divided in two types, namely, those which deal with the problems of inter-national politics as a whole and those which discuss the political problems at home involving the relation between the British and the Indians and among the different communities of Indians themselves and also the problems of social reform. In discussing the political problems of the modern world as a whole, he makes himself conspicuous by his trenchant criticism of the idea of nationhood. He thinks that the growth of nationhood in modern times is responsible for egoism, greed and mistrust among the various nations. The problem of the fusion of races was as much a problem in the early days of the Aryan occupation of India as at the present time. The solution adopted in India was that of amity and friendship and infusion of culture rather than that of exploitation. In the field of social reform he strongly criticised the iniquitous system of caste-distinctions, the communal differences and the separation of religious creeds that stood as a barrier between man and man. It is by the unification and common co-operation and a firm resolve to stand on their own legs that Indians can achieve their true goal of freedom and happiness. This may be an arduous task but this is the only way. True freedom cannot be accepted as a gift from anyone.

His chief criticism against the British was not of hostility but of understanding, and a spirit of revulsion against their policy of cruelty and exploitation.

In the field of religion Rabindranath started with the teachings of the Upanisads as interpreted and explained by his great father the late Devendranath Tagore. He started with the doctrine of the Brahman which presides over the external world and the inner world of man and creates everything out of its own joy. With the advancement of age this doctrine ceased to be a doctrine of the scriptures, it became a doctrine which he discovered in his own moral and aesthetic experience. There was a part in man which was fettered with the objective, natural and social world in bonds of necessity. But there was another part in man which was independent of all necessity and utility. It is a surplus man which shows itself in its natural spontaneity of joy and its expansive tendency for unification with other men and nature as a whole. This idea further showed itself in the conception of a creative spirit which overflows man and nature in its self-creating process and progress. In the advanced period of the poet's life he sought to arrive at some sort of a compromise between the idea of an absolute spirit abiding in nature and man and a creative spirit which is continually unfolding itself in the process of man and nature. The poet's appraisal of beauty is directly connected with his theory of surplus man. He believed that the notion of beauty is realised through a spontaneous activity and appeal of the spirit dissociated from all ideas of activity and necessity. Art stands for the expression of beauty and not for any didactic or other kind of purpose. But still in his various articles on literary criticism Rabindranath was always drawn to the idea that great works on art often leave a great message. His reviews of Śakuntalā and Kumārasambhavam of Kālidāsa are instances in point. He seemed to have been quite ignorant of the theories of literary appraisal by Sanskrit writers from the 6th to the 16th centuries. His theory of art therefore seems to be directly deduced from his general poetical and philosophical position.

In his theory of education and in his practice of it in his school at Santiniketan and in his conception of the idea of the Viśvabhāratī, he had tried to give expression and form to his ideas on education. He had made much sacrifice of money and time for this purpose. He was inspired with the idea of the ancient hermitages (tapovana) of India where boys grew up in direct contact with nature and her great life in trees and creepers, flowers and fruits. The surging life of nature under the infinite sky above supplied the most natural and beneficent stimulus for the growth and flowering of the budding human mind. He, however, was not in favour of purely academic

type of training that one finds in the Universities. The teaching of music and painting was regarded by him as essential for development of taste. This was an entirely modern idea. In his conception of the Viśvabhāratī he tried to bring in the great minds of the West, particularly the great orientalist of the West in contact with the young minds at the Śāntiniketan. He thought that this would be highly conducive to the broadening of the horizon of the students of India, who were confined within the narrow limits of their residence and whose perspective of life was vague and defective through the limited experience of local customs and manners. Rabindranath was himself a great traveller who always tried to widen his mind by his contact with great men and peoples of the world.

Last of all, Rabindranath was the greatest composer of Bengali songs. The songs are short, but the tunes are all his own. They do not tally wholly either with the European music or the orthodox Indian music. Rabindranath was a musician of great originality and the tunes are the expressions of the spontaneous feelings of his soul. His songs represent probably the best history of his inner experiences.

The writings of Rabindranath, poetry and prose, are very extensive and they also show marked stages of the development of his own mind. The present writer maintains that in and through the manifold development of Rabindranath's literary genius, one may find a consistent organic evolution. All through his poems, songs, dramas, essays, short stories and novels he seems to have been pressed forward by an inner urge that was guiding and controlling the progress and direction of his literary genius.

To establish this fact it is necessary to analyse the greater portion at least of his literary works, and this is an immensely exacting task. The present volume deals mainly with the analysis of Rabindranath's earlier poems. This must be supplemented by a further study of most of his later poems, prose works and songs before the idea formulated above can be definitely demonstrated. In my advancing years of continued illness I cannot hold out any promise. But if I am spared in good health, I shall certainly try to accomplish the task that I have set before me. But the last days of a man are often the days of disappointment rather than of fulfilment. But an attempt has been made in the present volume to show that the poetical genius of Rabindranath followed a line of organic development and unity.

The manuscript of the work was left with my publishers in 1942-43. But the work of the Press did not advance. After my retirement from the Chair of Philosophy in the Calcutta University I came to England in 1945, with the prospects of joining a chair in Sanskrit in this country. But I soon fell ill and was confined to bed

for the greater part of the last 3 years. All this time the manuscript was left to its own fate and there were many troublous happenings in Calcutta. I understand that ultimately the responsibility of correcting the proofs of a large part of the book was kindly shouldered by my former pupil Dr. Sashibhusan Dasgupta, lecturer, Calcutta University. My best thanks and the thanks of the Publishers are due to him.

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20-8-1948.

I

UNITY OF THE GENIUS OF RABINDRANATH

Rabindranath is no longer in the land of the living, so they say. Memorial meetings have been held all over the country. The day on which his physical remains mixed with the golden dust of Bengal, which he loved so dearly, thousands of men and women crowded over the streets and behaved in a most frantic manner, as if they had lost some dear and near relative. That familiar great figure, the type of Gothic structure, the beaming face lit with genius adored by millions of people all over the world, has vanished before our eyes once for all. But great men like Rabindranath never die ; he has left himself in all his books, his poetry and drama, his novels and essays, his songs and sermons, and probably also in his paintings. All along his life he has put brick upon brick to raise such a spiritual memorial of himself that it would be vain for us to think that it lay with us to preserve or not to preserve his memory. The memories of a Shakespeare, a Kalidas or an Aristotle stand by themselves as long as human civilization and culture last. So it will be with Rabindranath also.

But we human beings, provided we have life within us, burn with a fire of our will, and are not satisfied unless we do something. We acknowledge God to be omniscient and omnipotent, to be just and merciful, and yet when we are in trouble, we offer prayers to Him so that by His grace He may save us. But if God is omniscient it does us no good to communicate that to Him which He already knows. He is not mean that we should flatter Him. He is not weak that we should coax and cajole Him. We offer Him flowers and fruits that He has given us, and feel that we have at least done something to deserve His kindness and grace. There is a philosophy in India which holds that "to exist" means "to do something". Our very existence is meaningless unless we can do something. This is inherent in the very nature of our will, in the very nature of our personality, which impels us to effect something in thought and action and feeling, which are the only ways in which we understand that our personality is a living one. So we feel that we must do something in order to keep alive the memory of Rabindranath. He is not a man who was a Viceroy or Governor-General of India or a great general who led armies to devastation and enslavement of others' countries ; he was not a dictator to whom the

liberty of the nation was pawned ; he was not a politician who by his clever tactics got the better of the masterful geniuses in politics who kept the people in chains ; he was not a social leader who introduced widow-remarriage or abolished the *Sati* rites, or made large donations for opening a university or organizing a great institution. The good that such men do are often interred with their bones. So it has been with a Cæsar, and an Augustus, and an Alexander, or a Napoleon. In a new age new people came to whom they became personages of history. They have to be reminded of these great men, and statues are erected in the middle of a *maidan*, a park, or a square, in an institution or in the market-place, in a museum or an art-gallery, to remind us of the physical physiognomy of these persons. But Rabindranath was none of these. He was a creator of truth and beauty, and so long as human nature does not change, so long as human nature is permeated with the ideals of love and beauty, truth and wisdom, it will for its very nourishment have to go to the writings of Rabindranath, and regenerate those spiritual values. So far as we Bengalees are concerned, he is a great *guru* who has taught us to think and even to handle our own language, and so long as the Bengalees would live they cannot go away very far from the limits of thought which he had set for them. Rushing towards the dim infinity where the earth and sky meet, absolutely true and loyal to the Upaniṣads, he has taught us to recognize the truth of the same in the puzzling meanderings of a baffled and intoxicated age. For the whole of India, he will remain to the world, the torch of glory, the throne of honour, before which the whole world will offer their willing homage and devotion. What little use is there to raise a marble statue in the midst of a park, on the head of which the crows and vultures might take their ugly nap?

But still we must do something for him. Well, it is not possible to do anything for him. We may only take advantage of the emotion which his physical departure has roused in us to do something for us. But what can we do for ourselves? We cannot imitate him in writing poetry, we have not that genius or wisdom. If it is a result of industry and labour it is many times more the result of superior gifts, and the attainment of gifts is not possible through the exertion of will or devotion.

Rabindranath has in many places of his different writings referred to a unique occasion of his early life when all on a sudden the world appeared apparelled in the celestial light of joy, such that even the poorest stranger in the street seemed to him to be nearest to his heart. As the sun reflected itself from the house-tops and the meadows, these, the most insignificant commonplaces of every-day life, appeared to him bathed in a strange joy

of intoxication. In one moment and in one flash of intuition the veil that separates the inner from the outer was removed. He felt within himself the spontaneity of joy that disclosed to him the kinship and the affinity of the external world of nature crowded with living and non-living beings with his spirit and God within. The instruction that his father had drawn from the maxim of the Upaniṣads—the God that resides in water, in trees, and herbs etc.—was with him a matter of concrete experience. In his little work, *Personality*, he has shown how he derived his notion of 'personality' from this unique experience.

If we try to dig deep into the unique concept of 'personality' as conceived by Rabindranath and review the implications of this concept, we may have a glimpse into the nature of Rabindranath's own personality, which seems to me to be like a seed which has expressed itself in the living contents of all his works. It is here that we find a unifying principle of the apparently multifold manifestations of his genius in poetry, songs and thoughtful essays on various subjects. Just as a principle of life that lies hidden in a seed expresses itself in the stem, the leaves, the corolla, the calyx, the pollens, the fragrance, and the fruit, so it is the unique personality of Rabindranath that has made itself concrete and expanded in various stages of epochal developments of his emotional and intellectual progress.

Postponing for some future occasion a fuller analysis of this concept of 'personality', which holds within itself the unifying principle that combines the man, the poet, and the philosopher in one compact organic whole, we may briefly point out here a few of its implications without entering into any discussion. It means with us, firstly, a spirit of overflowing sympathy of an intuitive character; secondly, this intuitive realization is so incisive and deep that it can penetrate into the shells of crust that dogmatism and convention of ages have grown around most of our concepts, and which prevents us from penetrating deeply into their real nature; thirdly, our misconceptions about things are largely due to the fact that with our stagnant intellect we deaden the realities of life into inert stones gravitating towards one end only, and thereby we lose their contact and organization with the other aspects of reality such that we miss the fundamental facts of life as a coalescing whole; fourthly, it is through sympathy alone that we find our union not only with our fellow beings in their experiences of joy and sorrow, in their historic manifestation of life and character, their unity of experiences, and the like, but also with the fundamental unity of the life of man with life in Nature in all their various modes and manifestations; fifthly, it is through

this unique personality that the poet penetrates through the crusty outlook of traditions and conventions and arrives at its inner truth where it is in an organic contact with all forms of truth. The poet is not in the habit of making any keen philosophical or psychological analysis in the form of a logician or philosopher, but he dances in his inner vision of light and reflects himself through a host of imageries and analogies, which implies a fundamental unity all through.

Many writers of note have written upon the poetry of Rabindranath but few have sought to discover the unity that lies between his poetic fancies and his intellectual effusions.

The present writer cannot hope that it would be easy to prove in a convincing manner the unity that runs through the poetry of Tagore as also between his poetry and other works. It has to be confessed that it is a point of view of interpretation which in a way may show the organic unity of the personality of Rabindranath as it manifests itself through his works. It is only through a long and continued effort that the fundamental truth of Rabindranath can be adequately expressed at least to the satisfaction of the writer himself. There must indeed be here and there some slight channels of aberrations and deviations, but on the whole the unity is supreme.

As we take a bird's eye view of the development of the poetry of Rabindranath starting from *Kaḍi O Komal* we find that there is a stage in which the young Rabindranath becomes intoxicated with sensuous delight ; at this stage he does not philosophise over it, but his mind overflows with sensuous joy and its pathological counterparts. The very intoxication with this delight, which is merely of a sensuous nature, opens a further door and reveals to him the fact that the crowding sensations are interpreted by the mind and lived through by it, and what appears as sensuous is in reality largely mental. It is here that his sympathy with the material and the gross takes him to the mental aspect and he realizes that it is by subduing the grossly material that the spiritual element can manifest itself. It is here that he crosses the ferry in his imagination and from the shore of the material crosses over to the shore of the spiritual. It is from now onwards that he begins to realize that as in men so in Nature there is a continuous dance of life and of joy—a renewal of life through death, all of which are but the manifestations of a pulsating throb and dance of the transcendent and immanent reality that in one supreme grasp holds everything within it and yet transcends it. It is the fullness of life along motion of freedom and of joy that pervades every article of reality. He arrives here at the fundamental truth that our life and our joy is a

movement and a becoming, and the shadows of misery and death are but the darkness through which the scenes of the panorama are changed from moment to moment and from epoch to epoch. In living compresence and enjoyment of this life he listens from time to time to the call of the Unknown and the Beyond and the Infinite, which expresses itself through the Finite through a natural dialectic of thought and emotion. He realizes the close affinity of the Finite and the Infinite, both of which are wedded together in the concept of the whole, to the continually becoming and begetting. Thus from that which was crudely sensuous he arrives at the palpitating spiritual through a continual dialectic of emotion which holds the suspended animation of reason within its womb. Nature and man are complementary to each other, not in any narrow sense of an epistemological and ontological object and subject, but as one continuous flow of life from one to the other, and vice versa, both being expressions of a higher reality that runs through them. As there will be occasions later on to deal with these problems in the developments of Tagore's poetry it is not necessary to continue this illustration any further.

But we may illustrate it from another field of Tagore's thoughts, say, for example, his ideas of education. The fact that he feels the pulsating presence of one life throughout Nature and man, is well apparent from the fact that in handling the educational problems he is never tired of describing the importance of vegetable life and its association for the growth of human mind. The growth of knowledge must be like the growth of life, a process of organization and not merely one of accretion and that as in the growth of life the juicy circulation is the most essential factor, so interest and emotion are the most fundamental factors in the growth of intellectual life. That the process of instruction from the teacher to the pupil is not one of mere communication but a process of integration and production through which the teacher's mind descends into that of the pupil, is a rather fundamental note of Rabindranath's idea of education. It is for this reason that he gives supreme importance to the teacher in the life of the pupil. Thus here also we find that the same personality of Rabindranath that dallies in sympathy with Nature and with man, understands through it the secret of the growth of human intellect through education as being a repetition of the same process in which life as a whole develops.

In his *Religion of Man* he does not run for God as any extraneous being as a *deus ex machina* of a Deist or the Pantheistic unity of One Supreme Being which is all, or a personal God of the Semites or the Vaishnavas, but to the Infinite that is revealed in man as the joy and the

creative impulse that is wholly unfettered by any objective necessity or conditions. It is a revelation in him by direct intuition of the supreme principle of life that manifests itself to the psychic experience of man unconnected with motives that are primarily or secondarily biological, and it is the direct experience of life and life-force that is revealed in man in its unaffected spontaneity. Tagore's idea of aesthetics also takes its cue from here, but it is not the purpose of the present paper to deal in any extensive measure with the problems that are raised here, but we want here merely to enunciate the fundamental principle of our study of Tagore as a person, poet and philosopher. This principle, as we have already said, consists in our affirmation of the thesis that there is a fundamental unity in the genius of Tagore, and the principle of this genius and its activity is the principle of Tagore's concrete personality.

The theory suggested here of the unity of the genius of Rabindranath does not involve the ordinary criticisms against the theory of aesthetical individualism or the logical criticisms against the theory of the unity of mind. The objection against the theory of aesthetic individualism is that since the audience also plays the function of a collaborator with the author, it is wrong to think of the artist as a self-contained personality who is the sole author of all that he does, of the emotions he expresses, all of which are but expressions of a personality as an integral mystic unity. The criticism is pointed to the direction of the meaning of "self-expression" when we think that what makes a poem great is that it expresses a great personality, whereas in reality a great poem like *Hamlet* does not express so much of Shakespeare as it expresses ourselves. No criticism of Shakespeare ought to set us off looking to the man Shakespeare in the poem, and to reconstruct his life and opinions from it and turn all critical approach into idle gossip. An individual or a person should not be regarded as a self-contained and self-sufficient creative power whose only task is to be himself—a segregated unity standing alone and giving expression to the nature of his own being; but whatever a man does in art as in everything else is, in relation to others and he is thus what he is by the integrated history of his people, the family, the society, and the education that he has received; and the people to whom he addresses himself is also a part of this constitutive nature. A man does not develop his poetry as he develops his beard. A poet in his writings has always the minds of his fellow-men reflected in him. A man becomes aware of himself as a person only so far as he relates himself with others of whom he also simultaneously becomes aware as persons. The finite man with his finite capacity thus becomes infinite through his ever-growing relations.

His awareness is being continually re-inforced and developed ; if he has a new idea he must explain it to others, and at every such step he must develop himself. The aesthetic experience of the aesthetic activity must always be in the mind of the writer, but this subjective activity always implies an objective stimulus and an objective reference. A lover may love a woman and so far the love is his own, but it has an objective reference in the woman he loves. But the objective reference does not stop here. Whether the woman loves him or spurs him, it makes a unique difference in the nature of the experience of his life. We are reminded of the passage in Kālidāsa, *akṛtārtheṣu manasiḥ ratim ubhayaṣrārthanā kurute*. A particular artist's creation holds a definite relation between the given artist and his other fellow artists and also with the persons who are his audience as well as the entire history of the growth of his mind, subjective and objective, the society as a whole, and the moral and social and political opinions of his history and of his age. In speaking of Rabindranath's personality we do not deny these facts, but it need not be our purpose to analyse Rabindranath's personality into the component factors which may have contributed to its development. But it will be our purpose to take a synthetic view of the whole situation and to understand Rabindranath's personality as an integrated whole. Whatever may be the nature of the constitutive factors, the appearance of the personality is an emergent whole, and in studying it we study the character and qualities of this whole. A chemist may know that copper sulphate is composed of one atom of copper, one atom of sulphur, and four atoms of oxygen, but it is impossible for him to trace the qualities and properties of copper sulphate from the properties and qualities of these components. He has to study the qualities and properties of copper sulphate as one unique object, though he may remember in his mind that it is not a homogeneous whole but an organization of the heterogeneous elements, and it is the principle of this organization as manifesting itself in its diverse fields of activities that should form the subject of our study.

II

THE VALIDITY OF CRITICAL APPROACH

The extent to which the thesis of the unity of Rabindranath's genius can be maintained must be left open till a complete survey of the principal works of Rabindranath is made, and the success of our contention must be left open to the judgment of those readers who will accompany us through our fairly long survey. But the object of our present treatment is not merely or even mainly to demonstrate such a thesis. It is our purpose to approach in a critical fashion the works of Rabindranath for understanding and appreciating them, but this will, however, be associated with such comments on various points wherein the present author has something to add of his own or where his own ideas are not in agreement with those of the great author.

But to approach an author like Rabindranath is indeed a difficult task. He has written volumes of excellent poetry and prose. Even among the Bengalees there are but few who have thoroughly studied his works. So far his prose works have received but little attention in the hands of appreciative critics. His prose works contain novels and dramas, his views about education, society, politics, customs and manners, criticisms of works, and many reflective and religious essays, and also various topics of diverse interests. His poetical works and songs are vaster than those of most other poets. He took to poetry at a very early age and continued writing it till within a few days of his death. With the growth of his mind, experience and knowledge and with the development of new interests, his poetic talents moved in diverse directions which it is not easy to classify and rationalize within one perspective. In addition to these, his epistolary activity manifested itself in a huge number of letters and quite a good portion of it has already been published. They are inimitable in their turns of force, imagery, thought-provoking imagination and the poetic atmosphere together with wit and humour. It will be expecting the impossible to want from any student of Rabindranath to do justice to each and every work of the author. Moreover, such a treatment would bristle with so many references that the main thread of our investigation would be more or less lost. Again, the approach to the different kinds of literature which owe their existence to the poet must necessarily be different.

Theories of criticism in the present generation are in a state of chaos and there is an appalling confusion in critical practice. Critical literature of the day forms a heterogeneous body diametrically opposed to one another not only in current Bengali criticisms but also in the criticisms that we read of English and French books. There is generally seldom any evaluation of the language patterns or of the dominant idea. The critic often gives no reason why the book should or should not be read and would simply sometime talk vaguely about the author or his story or his poetry in a light and airy dinner-party manner. Thus to quote Charles William's criticism of T. S. Eliot we find:

"Mr. Eliot was probably a gad-fly . . . but it is not the gad-fly, which drove Io across seas and lands but rather one that stings us into a maze ; a maze of which the divisions are only sometimes green hedges and are at others tombstones and the walls of London drawing-rooms and of mildewed cellars and at others even landscapes. There is a clue to this maze, but we shall never know it, for the humming of the gad-fly is unmeaning."

Or we may quote a few lines from a review of Christopher Morley's *Swiss Family Manhattan* :

"It is a difficult stunt to tell a story in the first person of an eccentric specialist in card catalogues, for the story is to be told anyhow, whatever happens to the eccentric. But it is good to hear the voice of Mr. Morley in the mask of his protagonist. The book is not a novel ; properly classified it is the excellent old stunt practised by Swift and Voltaire usually for the purposes of satire. But Mr. Morley is too kindly and amused to be a satirist with poison in his sting."

Now, criticisms like these express only personal predilections and they tell us practically nothing about the work to which they are directed, and can hardly be regarded as evaluations of those works. Reviews like these are mere jumbles of disconnected characterisations and they do not consistently follow a single line of criticism based upon concrete principles and methods, and the critics think that the work of criticism consists merely in giving patches of personal impressions of the different characters. They do not seem to be aware of the fact that criticism as an organization of experience must face similar organization of experience of the poet and that such organization must be based upon certain definite and well-laid principles of criticism as entering into the organization of our experience. The poet has something to communicate to us and we must judge whether communications are of a synthetic nature

and whether they synthetically produce in us an aesthetic joy or reveal a truth inexpressible in any other manner than that employed by the poet—it is this manner which constitutes the art of the poet.

Rabindranath himself seems to have much faith in an impressionistic criticism and so probably had Goethe, Carlyle and Pater. The impressionistic critic, however, seems to think that the function of criticism is simply to have sensations in reading a work of art and to express it. Thus, an impressionistic critic in reading "Epipsychidion" of Shelley, would probably review it thus:

"To read 'Epipsychidion' is to feel a thrill of pleasure, to taste a sense of sublimity that would pulsate through one's veins in a rhythm and cadence of a transcendent nature. Our joyous experience of it is a better judgment of it than what can be expressed in words."

After all, we can only express our feelings as to how it affects us and so may other people also do when they are confronted with an work of art like this; and each of our experiences may produce a work of art which will stand parallel to the work which we enjoyed. A critic like Croce would probably say that in making a criticism a critic must by his sympathy place himself into the heart of the experience of the poet or the artist through the expressions of the latter as manifested in the work of art. The criticism is true or false to the degree in which the critic's placing himself in the position of the artist's experience is quantitatively complete and qualitatively accurate or false. Impressionism denies even the possibility of communication because the personal impressions vary and the same person may have different impressions in his different moods. If the impressions or sensations are felt to be joyous, the art is regarded as good. Even the joyousness of the experience is not always regarded as an indispensable condition, and a critic is appreciated in his profession if he is a successful linguistic technician, or in other words, if his own expressions are linguistic. The impressionist seldom takes into account the extent to which he has been able to evaluate the work of art correctly; it is enough if he can evaluate his own feelings, but in evaluating his own experiences instead of the work of art he is denying the function of criticism as an objective work in order to justify his own criticism. Naturally he concludes that anything that is not delightful to him is bad; his personal delight becomes the basis of evaluation for all experience and an objective justification of his criticism. The impressionist further fails to explore the central problem of literary criticism, viz., literary experience. Literature is not a mere momentary, sensuous pleasure but

it is a contribution towards a greater and greater understanding of ourselves as readers and of our own world of experience.

It is true no doubt that it is not possible for an artist to carry home to us properly and accurately his own experience so far as it is merely objective and so far as it is coloured by his own emotive impulses. Even when two persons look at the same scarlet colour of a flower, they cannot be sure that the sensuous experience of each of them is identically and numerically the same. When both use the word 'scarlet' or 'red' to denote the colour they are perceiving, they may have in their minds two different shades of colour which must remain incommunicable to each other. The expression 'red' or 'scarlet' is only a universal that cannot express the individual varieties that may have been stressed in experience by the one or the other. There is no proof that two minds act as one and identically the same photographic camera recording exactly the same impression. If this is so, how much more impossible must it be to communicate to the reader the artist's own internal experience which is saturated not only with the emotive impulses but also with vague yet concrete references to his own history of experience, his sense of value and numerous other psychic contents, which must have bloomed forth in his concrete intuition! No one can really communicate his own intuitive experience in its own concrete reality. It is the function of the artist to create a situation through the magic of language, its order, its trailing history of allusions, dimly luminous, the rhythm and the metre, the arrangement, the sonorous effect and the imaginative shadows and the like such that the reader may, if his mind is in a suitable literary plane, interpret the linguistic or pictorial situation in such a manner as to give rise to his mind experiences more or less similar to that of the poet. The objective content that is sought to be expressed in the literary or pictorial situation created by the artist, is not merely the extra-subjective element but the extra-subjective element bathed in the colours of the poet's experience and transformed thereby into a new reality. The reader's or observer's function does not consist in attempting the impossible, that is, to reproduce the same experience in him; it consists, however, in receiving such responses that he may in his mind enjoy a concrete experience more or less similar to the experience of the poet or the artist. It is obvious, therefore, that what the artist makes or communicates is not exactly the same thing as what he intended to do. Croce's view, therefore, that expression and intuition are entirely the same, is wholly wrong. When we look at Michael Angelo's 'Dawn' our expressive experience of the sculpture can only suggest such equivalents of the emotive experience of the artist as we are capable of

having. The poet or the artist creates situations through the blending of words or colours as are objective counterparts of his subjective experience, but he can do so only with partial success. His expressions may be qualitatively and quantitatively more heightened than his actual experience, or it may fall below the level. On the other hand, the reader or the observer is also creating in his own mind a situation of experience from the objective data of colours or words, which is more or less different from the actual experience of the poet or the artist. His own impression of the work of art is his own induced or created experience.

A poet may be confronted with an external material transfiguration, such as a landscape, or with a human situation either drawn from memory, other's writings, or from personal experience. From the whole concrete field the poet or the artist only chooses from amidst the jumble of the situation those elements which have an appeal to him. The reason of this appeal has to be sought partly in his nervous system and partly in the special kind of awakening of his mental structure. It is not so much always a matter of personal whim or the following up of a course of reasoning that the poet or the artist approaches his problem. It is well to remember at this stage the contribution of the Gestalt psychology that stresses the importance of the awakening of a particular organization. As one writer has pointed out, seeing the solution to a problem is like suddenly seeing the hidden face in a puzzle picture. As one first looks at the picture, one merely sees leaves and trees because the elements of the picture are arranged to that end; then suddenly a new organization is seen and the hidden face appears. Just what causes the new organization and how it is to be explained, Gestalt psychology does not say; but it does insist that the explanation cannot be reduced to the traditional laws of association. The spontaneity involved must go deeper than what temporal or spatial association can explain. Its roots lie deep in the sub-conscious and the temperamental psychology of the individual. The poet or the artist finds a special sympathy, inclination or liking, in integrating one part of the experience with the other leaving aside other parts as being useless or irrelevant. It is this part of the spontaneous choice of the mental organization of the poet or the artist in integrating his experiences that has often been called the intuition of the poet or the artist. This intuition or the awakening of a particular type of organization in the poet's mind involves within it not only the chosen, objective data but particular emotions, imaginations and impulses which spontaneously tend towards expressing in suitable liason of words, rhythm or metre and the blending of colours. According to the Gestalt psychology the act of mental ratiocination depends upon a certain organization of data. The

reason as to what words and expressions are to be chosen is a direct function of this organization. The expression in words or colours are the direct functions of the meaning that the poet or the artist had apprehended and both the meaning and the expression are the function of the awakened organization of the mental structure. The meaning apprehended by the poet or the artist is infused with emotive impulses and the characteristic feature of the expression-organization is for conveying the meaning of the poet to his audience. It must not, however, be forgotten that in the mental organization of the poet the mind of the audience is also present in a dim twilight-like shadow, for the mental structure of the poet or the artist always carries with it the mind of the audience along with the whole objective world.

The reader or the observer, provided his mental structure has proper affinities with that of the poet or the artist, gets induced in him through the expressions used by the poet or the artist an awakening of mental organization more or less similar to that of the poet or the artist. Depending on this similarity of organization some Indian critics have asserted the coalescence of the mind of the reader and the poet. Abercrombie, however, agrees more or less with our view that art, like any other communication of experience, can only be a symbolic communication; but it must communicate the *whole* experience so far at least as this is possible in a symbolism which can never really give the whole; the whole can only be given in the experience itself. But art must be a symbolism which, at any rate, gives all the important factors or representative aspects of an experience; my contribution and the world's contribution must equally be there. And this inclusive symbolism of art will consist not only of arbitrary symbols, such as words, but of empirical symbols also, such as, rhythm and harmony, colour and line, which have been found to carry with them certain psychological effects.

The fact thus remains that the mental organization of the reader or the observer is never identical with that of the poet or the painter.

So far the impressionist is right that one can only judge about his own impression or the mental transfiguration, but the experience of the poet or the painter cannot be directly communicated to the reader or the observer. It is the art or the practical skill of the poet or the painter to create such a situation through chosen words and rhymes or the blending of colours and lines that the reader or the observer may get induced in him the meaning which is more or less akin to that of the poet or the painter. Any wrong or displaced word, wrong shade of colour or line wrongly placed, might largely baffle the purpose. The

secret of the art of the poet or the painter consists in his helping the reader or the observer to create spontaneously a similar mental organization in the reader or the observer, but yet the two cannot be identical. The response to creation generated in the mind of the reader or the observer would depend very largely upon the frame of his mind, his history of experiences, his temperament and tone of affectability in particular directions.

But it would be a wrong procedure of criticism of a work of art if one should only take an estimate of merely the emotional elements with which he has been surcharged. He has to take account of the objective element, the external data on which the mind of the poet was focussed, and his skill in choosing the elements out of a large complex for blending these elements into a situation fit to become the vehicle of his passion or emotion. He has to take account of the internal logic that cemented the chosen elements and made it a whole—the inner necessity that demanded the internal dynamic that was responsible for the organic growth of the cellular element into a living whole; it is only a living whole having the properties of a united organism that can be charged with passion. Wheresoever the mental organization of the poet fell short of this there was a deformity and ugliness and thersoever it became lifeless; even if the mental organization was all right, when the artist by an exercise of his conscious reasoning and critical faculties so pruned or maladjusted or exaggerated any part of the organization through a misemployment of his expressive apparatus, he fell short of his destined purpose. The critic has also to take an account of the nature of the practical skill in the employment of his choice expressions for producing the desired effect.

The geographical or the biographical details regarding an artist may indeed satisfy our prying curiosity, our gossip-loving tendency regarding great men, but it is not so important for a critical evaluation of the work of art. A cow may be fed with straw, hay, green leaves, mustard shells and the like, but a chemical analysis of these materials will but help little to understand the value and the taste of the milk that it produces. The external materials that enter into the poet's mental structure undergo a transfiguration and it becomes an emergent reality standing by itself. An analysis and accurate measurement of his nervous processes is quite beside the point but yet this emergent reality is not wholly new as it has its basis and support in the conscious and sub-conscious, rational and emotional, impulsive and idealistic tendencies of his mental structure. It is by virtue of that peculiar mental-structure

that from out of a complex situation certain elements were chosen by his emotional impulse and life, so that these elements would divide and sub-divide amongst themselves into a cellular whole having differentiated functions of a structural organism—the artistic whole, which had an appeal of beauty to the artist and the reader. For the very same reason the artistic creation would impregnate the mind of the reader with a seed that developed in his mental structure a similar artistic whole. That artistic whole must have in the mind of the reader some such correlates in the conscious or the sub-conscious with which and through which the gene of the artist's mind would reproduce the new artistic organism in the mind of the reader. These correlates, therefore, as they are indispensable for the creation both in the mind of the artist and the reader, are as much objective facts, though of a mental nature, as the facts of the physical nature on which the artist's mind was originally diverted. It seems, therefore, to be the obvious duty of a critic to live through and express the rational history of the mind of the poet as far as they had their correlates on the mind of the critic himself.

From what we have said it will appear that no criticism can be regarded as a perfectly valid evaluation of the actual creation in the mind of the poet or its actual presupposition in his mind; for, as we have said, a critic has at his disposal only his own mental organization. But it has been argued that through the art of communication a seed of the poet's mind has been thrown into that of the reader where in its own climatic environment it has produced a plant more or less similar to that which had grown in the mind of the poet. It has been charged with more or less the same life, emotion and impulse. It is the business, then, of the critic to lay bare the inner necessity, the rationale, the conjunctive correlates that led the literary gene to develop its somatic parts which would at once explain the rational history of its life, impulse and emotion. Such a criticism is not impressionism but an objective treatment of a fact which is at once subjective and objective. The mere delineation of a thrill one feels in reading a work of art and expressing it in flowery bombasts and attributing to it any kind of arbitrary design or ideal or to charm the audience by long quotations from the author and thereby steal the merit of the author and make it appear as his own, is no business of a critic. There are, however, cases in which the charm of the author hangs loosely like a mist which has no definite shape and which by its shapeless and variegated forms intoxicates us, where it is not reason, not necessity, but a piling of images through most expressive words and rhymes that captivate us, that the critic may be obliged to

give specimens of them to show how these orchids which send no roots into the solid grounds, are yet fascinating by the colours of their bloom. In our appraisal and evaluation we shall try to follow this method as far as practicable.

III

THE SCHEME OF THE WORK

In the previous chapter we have discussed briefly the nature of subjective and objective criticism. Subjective criticism is more or less of an idealistic type and is based primarily on the appeal that a particular literature has on the reviewer. He records his general impressions of the piece under criticism, displays his linguistic talents in describing the ideas of the author in a general manner, describing in various forms of phraseology the good or bad impressions and tries to substantiate his impressions with copious quotations from the author. This has been mostly the style of criticism adopted by many celebrated critics of English neo-Romantic literature. The idealistic tendency manifested in such criticisms is shown by the fact that the evaluation of literature consists here in the personal appeal which may indeed vary from person to person. There is but little objective datum of critical evaluation and the imaginative creation of the poet is supposed here to have no other reality than the sort of agreeable or disagreeable feelings that such an author can evoke in the minds of the reviewers. We are reminded here of the famous dictum of Berkeley, *esse est percipi*, which was supposed to be true of all non-thinking things. To exist is to be perceived, or that the perception of a thinking person was according to this dictum regarded as the sole criterion of existence. All existence consists of sensations and sensation involves a sensing person apart from whose experience there was no existence for any sensation. Berkeley, of course, did not regard the sensation of any individual person as the criterion of existence. He thought that existence did not depend upon the experience of this or that individual but that there must be some individual whose experience was necessary to certify the existence of any sensation. The objectivity of the existing nature was secured by him by the supposition that it existed in all its objective forms in the experience of God. But modern critics can have no such super-person to evaluate the nature of art in its objectivity. Each critic arrogates to himself the right of evaluating the objects of art in accordance with the impressions that the art in question produces upon him.

Idealism has indeed branched off in many directions but throughout the course of its history it has been true and loyal in some sense or other

to the Berkeleyan form. The objects may not indeed be the creations of the mind, but whatever they may be, our knowledge makes a difference in them and contributions from the mind form an essential feature of what is known. It is no place here to discuss the nature of idealistic philosophy but I wish only to emphasise the fact that the critics of the 19th century and the early 20th century were largely influenced by the idealistic philosophy which continued its course from Berkeley to Bosanquet. After the advent of Hegel, Hegelianism had overflowed the British soil and all great thinkers of England till the first quarter of the 20th century had been principally idealistic, when as a reaction against it neo-realistic ideas filtered into England partially under German and American influence. Rabindranath himself in his poem *Bhāṣā O Chanda* in his idealistic vein says that the story of Rāma may or may not have been true and whatever happens may or may not be true, but what occurs in the mind of the poet and is woven up in his fancies, is true by itself. This involves an interesting theory which has not been worked out in any detail by the Poet.

In what sense can we say: all that happens is not true but all that is woven up in the fancies of a great poet like Vālmiki, is true? In the utterance of the Sanskrit rhetoricians we find a reference to a view much more moderate than this. Thus they say that existence is twofold; there is the existence of nature as created by God and there is the parallel existence of the artistic world as created by the poet's fancy which is unrestrained by the laws of nature. But Rabindranath practically challenges this view and holds that objective facts are only partially true whereas fanciful creations of an eminent poet are wholly true.

In the commonsense view, the fancies of a poet are almost as much untrue as dreams. Images, thoughts, memories, and above all, fancies have their reality only in their immediate apprehension, but objective facts, though limited by time and space, are true and real by virtue of their being facts. Objective facts in this view may be equated with truth and reality. A neo-realistic philosopher like Alexander would make only this difference that the objective facts may be contemplated. They are or were present or were capable of being present before the organs of sense of any perceiver. But thoughts, images, fancies etc. are enjoyed internally and they are not present before the organs of sense. This is the only difference between the objective facts and the subjective facts, between those that are contemplated and those that are enjoyed. If there were an angel who could have a direct apprehension of what is going on in our minds, the external world of contemplation and the internal world of enjoyment consisting of thoughts, images, fancies etc., whether artistic or

inartistic, both would appear as parallel regions of different structure but of equal reality. But what can Rabindranath mean by saying that objective occurrences are only partially true?

We must here refer to the well-known idealistic *a priori* doctrine which has formed the basis not only of much idealistic philosophy but of science as well. I mean the dogma: all that is rational, is real. This dogma may also imply its opposite negative that whatever is not rational, is not real. This dogma is the corner-stone of the Hegelian philosophy. The scientist, when he discovers a fact or an occurrence which is contradictory to a previously observed fact or occurrence, is not satisfied in sticking to his experimentally observed facts and does not rest contented in spite of his scientific temperament that he should accept only what he has observed, as somewhere hidden in his mind there is the *a priori* conviction that there is no place for the irrational in nature. Thus, when the scientist perceives that the propagation of light is wavy in its nature and also perceives simultaneously that in other experiments it manifests its corpuscular nature, he cannot simply swallow these two facts but he has a firm conviction in him that some such nature of light would be discovered which would resolve the contradiction and explain the nature of light in a harmonious manner. Again, observations made in the maximal field are found to be contradicted in the minimal field and an electron may be found to occupy two different places without passing through the intervening field. There is an opposition between the Quantum Theory and the Theory of Relativity. The scientist does not take the facts as they are observed but is goaded forward in search of consistency because somewhere in the fathomless depths of his mind the conviction is vibrating: all that is rational is real, and all that is irrational is unreal.

Again, when Hegel by his all-encompassing net of dialectics wanted to capture and imprison all that is existent, he was forced to leave out the contingent which would refuse to come within the net of rationality. He who wishes to capture all the big fish in a lake, has to use a net through the apertures of which many of the small fish may escape. But his attention and interest is with regard to the big fish and he says without hesitation: 'I have captured all the fish in the lake.' He does not take into account the smaller ones that have escaped his net and may be quite ignorant of their existence. If we have to measure and capture the world of existence with the net of rationality, there will be many contingent facts which would not be caught within its net. We therefore, have to ignore the existence of these contingent factors. Hegel therefore, says that only that is existent which is rational or only that is real which is rational. He ignores the

irrational. The concept of reality and existence being bound up with that of rationality, one cannot call that which is irrational, existent.

The creation of an artist is a rational whole. It may or may not have its replica in the objective world, but so far as the artist's creation is concerned, it is a completed and integrated whole in which every part has its reason in every other part. It is an organic unity, a welded whole of thought and words or thought and colours. Thus, an artist's creation, provided it is of a super-excellent order, is real in its internal coherence of rationality. In the objective world, however, there are contingent facts which may fail to give their reason in the congeries of connected events which we may try to represent to us as a whole. Thus, in the objective occurrences there may be many contingent events which may be facts *per se* but which are not rational as they cannot be rationally integrated with the associated occurrences of which one may wish to have a perspective as a whole. It is from this point of view that the fancies of the poet forming a harmonious and artistic whole may be said to be real by the application of the criterion of rationality and from this point of view the objective facts may only be partially true.

Rabindranath in his essays on the general appraisal of the nature of literature and art holds the view that the criterion of art and literature is the enjoyment that it produces—an enjoyment that is divested of all utilitarian satisfaction. In his *Religion of Man* he indulges in the theory of a surplus man, a rational soul or super-soul residing within us above the animal self to the enjoyment of which former, art and literature caters. It is this super-soul, the surplus man who perceives the world as joy and delights in it. Here also the appeal of literature is in its capacity for inspiring in us an enjoyment—a *rasa* which is essentially of a non-utilitarian type, where the joy is positively for its own sake and not for the satisfaction of any wants. Thus, so far Rabindranath's theory of art and literature is tinged with idealism. The Sanskrit rhetoricians in general or at least those who have been influenced by Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, have regarded the production of aesthetic emotion as the only criterion of literature. Jagannātha, however, tried to refer to beauty as a category separate from that of the *rasa* and he thinks that the creation of beauty (*rāmanīyakatā*) is the only criterion of good literature. Kuntaka, however, in spite of his predilection towards the production of *rasa* as the criterion of good literature turns also to the conditions which may produce it and this he called *vakrokti*. *Vakrokti* consists in the proper harmony of blending of expression, words and their content. Throughout his whole book *Vakrokti-jīvita* he untiringly tried to demonstrate the actual conditions

under which words and expressions may become literary. Kṣemendra, the author of *Aucitya-vicāra*, turns to subjective and objective consonance called *aucitya* as the soul of literature. It is in the writing of Kuntaka and the *Aucitya-vicāra* that we find glimpses of the type of objective criticism that we propose to pursue here. In spite of his idealistic bias and his view of the subjective appraisal or evaluation of literature, Rabindranāth follows quite a different method in the criticism of literature that he has himself made. Thus, in his review of *Śakuntalā* he does not follow the traditional method of reviewing *Śakuntalā* with quotations from Goethe and Schiller. Goethe's criticism of *Śakuntalā* was quite true to himself. He was an idealist and he evaluated a piece of literary work in accordance with the impression that it made on him, as the well-known quotation from his criticism on *Śakuntalā* may well demonstrate. But Rabindranāth, though idealistic in his theory of art criticism, follows quite an objective method in his criticism of *Śakuntalā*. He has tried to show the scheme of the rational kernel which Kalidāsa had in his mind in drawing up and modifying the story of *Śakuntalā*. The individual description, the imagery, the profundity of experience and study, the command over the language and the suitability of expressions with their meaning—all lent their charm to *Śakuntalā* as a masterpiece of literature. But all these would have been largely futile had he not demonstrated in it a perspective of things, a law of moral order which forms the backbone of *Śakuntalā*. We may, however, criticise Rabindranāth's interpretation. Thus, we may say that Rabindranāth is not right in regarding the curse of Durvāsā as a curse upon passionate union. We may also object to his view that the repulsion of *Śakuntalā* and her stay with her mother in an intermediary world where she suffered pangs of separation from Duṣyanta, could be regarded as a purgatory of repentance for the purification of her passionate love. Thus we may say that whatever may be the prudery of our times, the Gāndharva form of marriage is quite a valid form and the union between parties was such that it did not infringe the prescribed legality or morality or *dharma* as such. We find also that Kaṇva did not take any exception to this marriage and regarded it as an oblation offered to the right place though it had turned out purely as an accident. The pangs of separation which made *Śakuntalā* oblivious of all things so that she could not hear the call of the angry sage Durvāsā, is quite natural. It was not due to an undue passion of an illicit nature but it was due to the legitimate love of a wedded wife for her husband. If there were any fault in the situation, the fault lay with Durvāsā who called but only once and would not understand the situation and considered himself insulted. We may further say that

Śakuntalā's stay in the semi-divine world made her suffer the pangs of separation but there was no repentance in it and it is difficult to understand why any and every pang of separation should lead to the purification of love.

But all these criticisms are here beside the point. We may object to the validity of the perspective with which Rabindranath reviewed *Śakuntalā* and we may judge the work with quite a different perspective. But what we wish to emphasise here is that Rabindranath tried to discover a rational purpose out of the tangle of events constituting the theme of the work. Out of a puzzle of diverse kinds of occurrences described in that drama he tried to discover a rational picture which would give meaning to the work as a whole—which would explain the organic nature of *Śakuntalā* as an object of art. It is this attempt at discovering a rational scheme out of a tangle of objective events displayed in a work of art that constitutes the objectivity of criticism that can give a rational justification for the work as a well-knit whole whereby alone, according to Rabindranath's own testimony, the work of art can be said to be real in a stricter sense than the actual whole of objective events occurring in the outer world. Rabindranath here was not satisfied merely in recording what *rasa* it produced on him or what pleasant impressions were produced by the work which he could certainly do with his unusual command over language and justify it by quotations from *Śakuntalā* and by an appeal to the great names of European writers like Goethe and Schiller.

It is, however, a privilege of the mind that all things of the external nature, all products of art and the minds of other people, their thoughts, images, feelings and psychological history, have to be apprehended by the mind and their value has also to be appraised by it. It is, therefore, in a way impossible to leave out of consideration the impressions of all that is outside our minds (the objective) on our own minds. These impressions involve, indeed, the joy and exhilaration that is aroused in us and which are characteristic of our mind. The sort of impressions, pleasurable or painful, artistic or inartistic, must necessarily depend in a large measure on the structure and history of our own experience. The contact between the objective and the subjective not only produces in us joy and sorrow and notions of other types but also an intelligent appreciation of the scheme of things in any perspective revealed in totality. Such a perspective involves an integral relation of the various parts—the constituents of the totality—so that it may be treated as a rational whole. The mere sensations of the parts are in themselves in a way irrational as they are practically relationless. Suppose in a misty light of a dusky

evening I see some white colour at a distance but I am not satisfied at the sensation of that white patch of colour dimly covering a particular space of our field of vision. I am roused up and I look at it more attentively to seek its meaning. What is the meaning of 'meaning' here? The white patch of colour produces a unique sensation and I might have stopped there, but I am not satisfied until I have been able to relate its parts in such a manner as to convey to me the distinctive whole which I can further relate to some known experience of the mind. When by greater attentive examination I can complete the process and differentiate the distinctive parts of the white patch of colour and discover that it is a white cow, my enquiry is satisfied; I have found a meaning. Of course, I may carry it still further and if it is a fenced compound I can make a further enquiry as to how the cow, which does not belong to me, could enter into the compound, and my enquiry will be satisfied when I discover a breach in the compound wall or the gate left open through inadvertence. But howsoever I may extend my enquiry still further and further, we are passing from one relational whole to other relational wholes of which the first relational whole was a constituent; and until one relational whole is achieved, our mind can hardly set itself at rest. If the mind does not make any enquiry and lets pass any unique impression merely on its face value, it only appears that it has no interest in that particular impression and no desire to grasp it within our psychic fabric; and in such a case the impression is merely a contingent one devoid of any rationality and meaning; as such it is never digested in the system of our experience. The discovery of meaning consists in the affiliation and harmonisation of any particular experience with any other previously attained experience. Our experience grows in this fashion by a partial or complete affiliation of any particular experience with what was previously attained. This search for meaning or the spirit of rationalisation is a dynamic contained within our psychic stuff by which the psychic stuff grows with experience. I have shown elsewhere in some details how there are cases in which the affiliation is not distinct. In such cases we cannot apprehend any recognition on our part of any particular experience of the present as being affiliated with what was partially or wholly acquired in the past. Yet in such cases the newly presented experience does not appear to be strange. Our contention is that even in such cases certain forms of line or colour, of sound or sense, may have struck so deep in the subconscious that they cannot immediately present themselves before the conscious mind. But in many cases the existence of such mute experiences in the subconscious responds to our present experience with a resonance of mute affiliation which fills the mind with pleasure. It may here be pointed out that all

cases of recognition or affiliation of a present experience with that of the past arouse joy if there is a discharge of activity in the way of effort. In the other case also there is such a mute recognition and effort is not directly apprehended, the resonance being largely the effectuation of the interest in the subconscious. Such mute affiliations produce in us a sense of harmony and symmetry and the result is seen in the discharge of an activity which reveals itself as experience of beauty and associated joy.

But all this may be digression. What I am interested in showing is that the growth of our psychic stuff through experience is essentially through a search for meaning or through the spirit of rationalisation. The reviewer or the critic who has to judge a poet's performance in an objective fashion has not only to record a personal appeal or the internal response that he has with reference to the poet's work but he has to discover the principle of rationalisation, the line in which the particular author has been anxious to search for the meaning of his experience as a whole. The critic must objectively review the rational structure of the poet's creations. He must therefore discover the sort of interest that the poet had in co-ordinating his experiences which alone would lead to the crystallisation of his thoughts and emotions. For this purpose the critic must understand and take full account of the psychological structure of the poet. Mere details of personal history or the topographical locations of the various events of his life may be quite out of place in such a review provided these do not in a marked manner assume the responsibility in giving new turns to the poet's mind. But even then the narration of such details may from certain points of view be regarded as quite external, for what the critic is interested in studying objectively is the psychic lines of action and the modes of response which may be discovered as peculiar to the poet and which can explain the psychic structure of his creations. Such an objective study is limited to the discovery of the secret springs of joy and action of the poet's mind which explain the perspective and the composition of the pictures he has drawn. We may have, no doubt, much interest in the personal details of the poet—how the poet spent his life, under what environments he did his work, the influence of his personal relations and friends, the education that he had, but these are in a way quite remote as they do not form any part of the mental structure of the creation of the poet, of which alone a direct and immediate objective study is possible.

But it may be objected that the creation of the poet not only involves the idea, the content of his thought, the bent of his mind, his spiritual and rational convictions, but the materials of his creation as well. These materials are the words, the images, the metre and the rhyme. It may thus

be contended that an objective study of literature should include a detailed examination of the choice of words, images, rhyme and metre with which these are wedded. In Sanskrit literature, Kuntaka followed this type of objective criticism in his appraisal of poetic value. Throughout his *Vakroktijivita* he discusses how the conjunction of particular words, the choice of particular turns of expression, the formation of particular phrases and compounds in particular places, the general form of the combination of words and phrases for the expression of a particular idea and the like, may lead to the excellence of the poet as an artist. He has shown how the same idea expressed in two different forms may lead to superior or inferior art. This importance of words, images and forms of expression, the metre, rhyme, alliteration and the like constitute actually the fundamental details of the art of a poet. This was no new discovery of Kuntaka but this was known to Bhāmaha of the 6th century as well. The credit, however, of fully explaining the objective method of the appraisal of poetic art in details for the first time in the history of criticism must belong to Kuntaka. But it has not been possible for us to attempt a criticism of Rabindranath's art in this direction though it cannot be denied that such a study must form an essential feature of objective criticism of the art of any great poet. Such a work on Rabindranath's art can hardly be attempted in a work specially meant for those who are unacquainted with the Bengali language. The words in every language possess special history as if it had a special type of individuality and personality. Their meanings are not conveyed merely on their face value but on the trailing clouds of mute suggestions which endow them with special individuality leading to the choice of one word rather than another having the same dictionary meaning. The special conjunction of words, the unique turns of expressions as well as the special types of resonance associated with particular metres for heightening the impression of particular types of ideas, is unique to every language. The Bengali language belongs to a people who have a living heritage of Sanskrit culture and literature and whose minds are steeped in the spirit of Hindu religion and ideals of life. The allusions and images, therefore, of the Bengali literature have a history trailing backwards into the dim twilight of a hoary antiquity. The advent of the British in India has produced certain changes in social life which must be reflected in poetry. A computation of all this and a due reckoning of the particular value of the expressions, words, images, allusions and the like in the writings of such a prolific writer as Rabindranath would be impossible in any attempt made in any language other than Bengali. I have therefore deliberately left any critical appraisal of Rabindranath's art on the material side out of my consideration. I have

limited myself to the study of Rabindranath's mind and the nature of his personality, his philosophy and perspective of life as a whole in their gradual evolution from the earlier stages, and I have not therefore restricted myself to the study of his poetry alone but to the study of all his prose writings as well. But as my main interest has been to study the scheme of his psychic structure, I have only glanced over his stories and novels so far as they have been expressive of the general structure of his mind. I have not attempted any serious criticism of the characters of his novels and their mutual conflict merely from the interest of characterisation. I have therefore practically excluded the purely technical side of his art from the present examination.

As a preliminary to the study of Rabindranath's mind as revealed in his works I have discussed in the following chapter the spiritual and intellectual influences of his father and Raja Rammohan Roy that had left so deep an impression on him in the formative period of his youth and which in a way explain in an internal manner his perspective of life that developed from epoch to epoch remaining loyal, till the end, to the general characters of spiritual values and ideals, to which he was initiated in his early life.

But it may be objected that my approach is too much of a philosophic nature. It is like introducing a mad elephant in the groves of lotus flowers and that a philosophic dissection is likely to destroy the pure appreciation of poetry, the enjoyment of æsthetic joy. It may also be said that poetry proceeds spontaneously from the inner joy and as such it is as impossible to explain the poet's creation by an examination of its psychic scheme as that of explaining the music of the nightingale by a dissection of its physiological structure. Poetry is the spontaneous creation unfettered by any ordinary psychological laws ; it has its appeal only to those who know how to appreciate poetry and the critic's work is both futile and unnecessary. Rabindranath himself following the tradition of the Upaniṣads says that all creation is out of joy but yet he says that his creation is more than the song of the bird which sings in joy. He says that he gives something more than what was given to him and therein he is superior to the bird :

You have given song to the bird, he sings that song, he gives no more,
 You have given me tune but I give more than that, I sing my song.
 To me you have given the task to compose your heaven,
 You give to all but ask only from me,

But what is it that he gives? What is the content of his creation and what is the nature of the poet's joy? This joy cannot be regarded as a transcendental something when its ways of manifestation are through ordinary psychic concepts, words and images and the admission of such a transcendental something would naturally be in conflict with the unity of our psychic nature. Surely this joy is not a mere emotion for it reveals an excess of energy, a superfluous activity which is in full accord with our psychic faculties. It holds within it an internal harmony of tendencies, freedom and contemplation. The manifestation of this joy has behind it a design, a structure or perspective without which all that this joy could create would be the mere babbling of a child or the cooing of a bird. It is this additional element that gives meaning to the poet's words, raises him to the position of a seer and endows his creation with reality. Above all, it involves a coherence of ideas which renders the poet's creation into an organic whole. It is the apperception of an organic structure, the apprehension of a picture from out of a tangle of disconnected things that forms the poet's internal intuition. This intuition is sometimes regarded as transcendental because here the conscious and the subconscious work together and the contributions of the subconscious remain to us unanalysable and undiscoverable in consequence of which we cannot directly analyse all the processes involved in a creative work. The harmony and symmetry of things that have sunk deep in the subconscious mind of the poet, which is largely due to his temperamental manner of gathering experience, tradition, culture, environment, conviction and belief, help him to associate from out of a mass of disconnected events and experiences such relevant articles as may contribute to the formation of a picture which is harmonious in its inner subconscious nature. It is the feeling of exhilaration in the mute apprehension of the harmony that lies inexpressed in the poet's subconscious nature with what he has discovered by its light in the objective world of facts or in the subjective world of thoughts, that forms the basis and composition of his joy. This joy that is intuitively apprehended along with the picture becomes dynamic in the minds of those persons whose intuitions are so clear and deep that they spontaneously take shape by the immediate suggestion of words, images, turns of expression and the like, which latter is a music in which the joy expresses itself. It is only such persons that can be poets. Our words do not directly appear to us in our conscious minds. Thus, at the present time, when I am writing these lines, I find my mind to be absolutely blank. I know thousands of words of my language and of other languages too, but where are they? They are all in some deep store-house unknown to me. As ideas dawn and demand their expression, the words spontaneously

spring up from some deep cavern quite beyond my effort or my knowledge. So a poet's intuition involving the perspective and the joy of its apprehension or sometimes appearing merely as a joy or a pang, fills the mind with a musical harmony. It is by the force of that harmony of the internally felt joy that words rush out in rhymes or rhythms quite beyond the control of the poet ; but the feeling of that joy, the feeling of harmony or music, is implicitly pregnant with a perspective and a meaning, a completed structure of the whole, which arises from the depths of our being and which animates our inner soul. As words rush out the intuition becomes more and more concrete, and the hazy mist of the implicitly perceived vapoury ideas takes form and becomes a concrete picture. I deny the view of Croce that the intuition involving its emotional aspect of joy was already before the eye in the finished form of a Minerva. It is like the oozing out of a stream from the crevices of the rocky soil. The joy with which a particular landscape might inspire us, may be quite shapeless at the time of its first feeling. This shapeless joy moulds itself spontaneously into a suitable rhythmic form which brings with it its own world of implicit suggestions of the subconscious mind ; and the dominant perspective of the poet which has sunk deep in and through the levels of his mind, takes form. As words rush out the picture becomes more and more definite in the poet's mind and ultimately it is completed. The joy felt, therefore, at the time of composition has its own specific form, which however, is absolutely in its implicit, undefined nature. It is by the co-operation of the conscious and the unconscious mind, that the words, images and rhymes clothe up a particular perspective or idea, which emerges out of its bottom and becomes gradually visible to the poet's eye. The poet must, therefore, have a psychic nature, which, impressed with particular forms of intellectual perspective that dawn in the subconscious mind, makes its appearance in the conscious plane in proper form and clothing. But without this perspective, without this design, there would be no words, no images, no rhymes. The poet's creative joy, therefore, is not a simple emotion. It is the implicit undifferentiated stage of the complex intellectual design, of which the poet becomes aware only when through the spontaneous working of the unconscious mind it takes its proper form. The joy preceding each composition is, therefore, unique and internally differentiated within itself though the difference may be apprehended only when the creation has been complete. What comes spontaneously from the unconscious mind, is criticised by the intellect and training of the poet, but the creation proceeds spontaneously from within himself. The creative stage is thus in one aspect passive and in another aspect active. But no creation is

possible unless we may assume that the poet's mind is stamped, moulded in particular ways of seeking meaning by particular schemes or rational designs. Our conclusion, therefore, is that the so-called transcendental joy of the poet is not a homogeneous emotion but it is pregnant with pulsations of the subconscious level which by its very intensity of excitation discharges particular perspectives which, though implicitly held within the joy, could not be recognised. The poet's joy or pang does not create, it is only an indication that the creative impulse is at work. The joy felt at the melting point of the inner apprehension and creative impulsions is in accordance with it. We thus see that the intuition of the perspective, which finds its finer and finer linguistic expression and concreteness at the end of the creation, was at work from the time when the poet felt his exhilaration. It is, therefore, essential to understand a poet's mind, its rational approach to things, its convictions and beliefs, the sort of internal intuitions to which his subconscious mind responds and without which no creation is possible.

IV

THE RELIGION OF MAHARSHI DEBENDRANATH

The battle of 1757 is not only the story as to how a handful of British soldiers drove away big divisions of the Oriental army, but it is also the story of the beginning of a new era, when a little of European learning was to blow away heaps of dust that had accumulated for ages on the Oriental wisdom. European wisdom, particularly since the Renaissance, is characterised by the avowed tendency of conscious individuality and was not prepared to listen to all traditional and uncritical opinions about men and things that might have collected together. Whatever may be the force of authority which sanctifies it, European wise men from the 18th century or even before that were not prepared to accept anything, until by the application of their own test, they found it valid. This attitude of mind blew away the Papal supremacy and the Catholic superstitions that had terrorised Europe for centuries. It removed the time-old geo-centric conception of the universe, ushered in the mechanical conception which explained the motions of our planetary system, upset the creation theory of the Bible and discovered the history of the mother earth to be immeasurably more ancient than what the chronological account of the Bible would justify, and established an intimate relationship not only between man and the ape, but tried to trace a natural development of life from amoeba to man, purely by mechanical causes. It also discredited the superiority of the kings and bishops alike as well as the divine authority of the kings. The terrific conflict of the old and the new flared up into a conflagration and convulsed France and produced cataclysmic changes and the banner of equality, fraternity and liberty flew not only on the palaces and churches of France, but it shook the thrones of all Europe to their foundations. New countries were discovered, new ways of communication were established, the distance of time and space began to vanish; side by side with the new knowledge new advancement in technology, inventions of new instruments began to take place; science helped technology and technology helped science and these two brothers in alliance began to put forth their claims for the mastery of the world and the discovery of truth. Logic was thoroughly renovated and purely a *priori* methods of olden times began to give place to the application of inductive methods and there was not a department of knowledge or faith which was not affected by this new enlightenment

which was not only a light of illumination to show the path of the new but also a fire that burnt the old. Such of the old alone were allowed to survive that could stand the test of this fire. Yet it was not the fire of the Caliph that burnt the library of Alexandria but it searched and restored all the ancient lore that was lost or scattered and revived what was worth living in by its vitalising energy.

India however, was still snoring at the time in its dogmatic slumbers, dreaming in terms of its old myths, folk-lore and superstitions, and the emotional outbursts of religious fervour that had flared up from the 15th century had practically swept away the sturdy rationalism and balanced wisdom of the past. Philosophy had descended into the lurches of arid and abstract, dry and barren logicism or into the essenceless surging of fanciful emotions, rhapsodies and ecstasies which were regarded as more valuable than critical and rationalistic thought. As an arid abstraction of logic creates a whirlpool in which one spins round and loses his connection with the stream so a surging emotionalism hurls a man off his feet and may take him away to any directions. The history of religions has proved how much mischief can be wrought by fanatic emotionalism. The effect of this cultural sluggishness was reflected upon the character of our people.

As the conflict between India and Britain first took place in Bengal, so the first sparks of the conflict of the two cultures were also manifested in Bengal and from the middle of the 18th century, long before the establishment of the Sanskrit College and the Hindu College, the new spark set fire to the minds of a number of enthusiasts in Bengal of whom Raja Rammohan Roy was the foremost. He had not entirely severed his connection with the traditional outlook but he was a pioneer who took his stand upon the Upanishads which had inspired the culture of India for more than two thousand years. He initiated a movement of reformation in which he tried to purge off the superstitions and the excessively emotional elements of the current religion and explained the religion of the Upanishads on monotheistic lines avoiding the pitfalls of metaphysical dialectics. His reformation of religion involved within it not only a reformation of the religious creed but also of the social evils that had crept into Hinduism. Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, father of Rabindranath, was the first disciple of Raja Rammohan. Many were the satellites revolving round the Raja and many of the illustrious figures who were produced as a result of the movement tried to hold a new torch which enkindled a new wisdom for the benefit of Bengal. Meanwhile, Mill and Bentham, August Comte and Rousseau had been shifted to India and were producing their effect upon

the literary men of the time, of whom Madhusudan and Bankim Chandra were the foremost. In Madhusudan, Bankim Chandra and Nabin Chandra, the three great poets of the period, we find a state of transition in which attempts were being made to interpret the old on new lines and to impregnate it with new virility. But the tattered old bottles could hardly hold the foaming wine that was being imported daily from Europe. The University of Calcutta was established in 1857, for teaching the new learning of Europe. Rabindranath was born in 1861, in the most cultured family of Calcutta and his grandfather was the first man to visit Europe from Bengal. Rabindranath had the just suitable intellectual apparatus and genius which could assimilate the spirit of the West in its fulness, though he had by training and environment a natural bias for the ancient wisdom of the East.

Though Rabindranath was from his childhood initiated to the Brāhma faith of his father, as reflected in many of his early songs, we gradually find him discovering a religion of his own, of which we find but little trace either in the writings of ancient India or in the writings of the West. It will be our task in the present chapter to give a brief survey of the growth of Rabindranath's faith as reflected in his writings with special reference to his songs.

The faith of Brāhmaism consists in regarding Brahman or God as pure Knowledge, Infinite and Truth. But avoiding the notorious dialectics of Śaṅkara, which reduced religion into a philosophy, Brāhmaism accepted the personality of God and also attributed to it all the Vaiṣṇava qualities of God as all-merciful, kind and benevolent, who could be approached and moved by prayers. In Debendranath's *Brāhma Dharma* we find elaborate quotations from the Upaniṣads which show that the Upaniṣads were the fundamental scripture of Brāhmaism. It is noteworthy therefore, to observe that though Rabindranath with the advance of years had approached towards God through an entirely different channel, he seldom perceived the contradiction of his own thought with that of the Upaniṣads. This led to the result that side by side with his new inspirations and new experiences, he used the Upaniṣadic language never critically examining whether such language was really suitable to the expression of his experiences. Full of religious experience as he was, he seldom succeeded in giving a form and shape to the deep exhilaration of his inspired moments. His songs and his preachings as embodied in the small prose speeches of the Śāntiniketan series show him at his best. It does not seem to us that he has done justice to himself in his Hibbert Lectures '*Religion of Man*'.

The Ganges arises far away in the inaccessible regions of the Himalayas, where the hermitages of ancient India with groves of śāla, almonds, mangoes and other blossoming trees and shrubs lay with geese quietly basking in the sun on the sandy bank and the she-deer rubbing the cheek-bones of the he-deer with loving gentleness, and the branches of the trees lay covered with the ochre clothes of the hermit boys, dripping water from the ends. On the background of the uprising valley were the snowy peaks dazzling in gaudy colours, glorious and magnificent, suffusing the sky with ruddy and purple beams and merging slowly into the emerald in the early dawn—which in the deep dark night under the shadow of the Orion and the Great Bear sparkled in misty whiteness, like beams of light coming from afar and filling the mind with a sense of mystery and wonder. In the early morning the whole atmosphere became full of the smoke arising from the sacrificial fires, which scented the breeze with the burning sandal and the holy clarified butter ; with the chirping of birds slowly mixed in cadence, the chanting of the *sāma* songs reverberated in the stony ranges and redoubled the music in the echoes. In the cottages and in the shades the holy men were engaged in deep meditation. The beasts of the forests sat in the yard yawning or ruminating like pet animals, and from the gardens in the preserve of the forest there came intoxicating smell of Jasmine and Madhabi, which would send a thrill of joy to the passers-by ; study and meditation, easy and unsophisticated life, with birds, animals and plants, natural and unobstructed joy in a spontaneous life, spent under the urge of Nature, sympathetic and loving, yet spelling the mysteries of the universe in the light of their own souls! The highest aspiration of man as recorded in the fiery utterances of the Upaniṣads, which the sage and the sagacious, the wise and the deep thinkers of the Orient discovered in association with the great kings of the capitals, was lived through in these hermitages where the hurry and bustle of cities were drowned in the chirping of the birds, where the weary cares and anxieties of a toilsome life had subsided into the passionless calm and almost a juvenile love of Nature around. As the extensive Himalayas range from one side of India to the other but yet its peaks grade from higher to higher pointing their tapering hands towards the heavenly shower of beams of light from the pathless infinity, the beyond of the stars, from where the light of one divine music showered upon them, so were the lives of the Ṛṣis ; they lived an innocent life and were anxious not only for their fellow beings, not only for the birds and beasts that haunted the hermitage, but also for the tender creepers and plants, the shrubs and groves. Such was the easy and simple flow of their love that even plants and creepers appeared to them to be endowed with spirit and life.

character and personality, playing the same role of joy and sympathy as we are accustomed to in our human field. In spite of this extensive sympathy, this deepening of life that mocks the barriers of egotism and wells up in unfettered streams towards every tree, every harvest crop that is born and dies with the season, towards the morning light, towards the water of the brook and the mellowed darkness of the evening, there arose a cry for the sublimity that transcends the universe, that transcends the limitations of human thought and feeling and goes upwards in deep communion and harmony with that eternal source of joy, love, energy and thought contributing to that divine music that upholds the law and order of the universe—one little tone or cadence, which fulfils its destiny in the eternity of the whole. We do not know actually what these hermitages were, but from the distance of more than thirty centuries in the haze of the traditions of the past as preserved in our literature, our books of myths, our scriptures and the Indian heart that we have inherited from our forefathers, watered by the same blood that flowed through their veins, the utterance of every verse of the Upaniṣads raises before us the spell of an ancient charm such that as though the mist of the morning, the glowing peaks of Kanchanjangha appear before our eyes, sombre and majestic, beautiful and sublime, so that the picture of the ancient life in the hermitages springs before our mental vision and in the light of that vision modern India and the civilized world of power and pomp, greed and hatred, machines and cataclysms, vanish away as a mirage of the moment. The charm of these verses not only works miracles before our eyes but even foreigners unacquainted with our history and tradition are affected in a similar manner. Thus says Giuseppe Di Lorenzo "il moderno professore indiano anglicizzato comincio a recitarmi, anzi a catare, con l'antica, milenaria melopea, versi del Rāmāyaṇa, del Mahābhāratam, della Gītāgovinda ed ecco, che al ritmo solenne di quel canto si dileguava Cambridge, si dileguava Napoli, ed appariva l'India del Himālaya, l'India della sacra Gangā, l'India di Brahma, di Viṣṇu, di Shiva e di Buddhō."

This ideal of a *tapovana* or hermitage flickered in the cavern of the poet's mind, trained as he was from his childhood under the influence of a Maharshi, and as his days were passed in close touch of all that was best in the traditional heritage of India. Like the river Ganges, slow and meandering, was the journey of his poetic mind, through the ancient rocks and gorges, forests and herbage, through which his genius was working under obstacles until it descended with its clear and limpid stream, filtered through the accumulated ages of sands, into the valley and the plains, through which it flowed, and swallowed up within it many tributaries from diverse sides and offered itself to the service of the masses, quenching

their thirst and offering them ablutions. But through all its meanderings and its vascillating courses it was true to its destiny towards the great ocean, which it already held in itself in its deep cravings for it.

It has been said above that the Upaniṣads were the glacial basis of the stream of Rabindranath's life. The stream accumulated as the glacier melted slowly and slowly by the heat of his heart. It is for this reason, as we shall see below, that there was a conflict between his genius and the genius of the Upaniṣads with regard to the traditional meaning that is associated with them. In the first stages of his faith he accepted the creed of the Upaniṣads which filled his young mind with a greatness which it could hardly encompass and embrace with its tiny hands. He went round and round it but could hardly carry it in his hands. But the faith was stronger than his intellect and in his advancing years, as his intellect grew, he still held fast to the Upaniṣads, but the block of the old stone lost its icy stubbornness and became pliable under the heat of his genius which moulded the Upaniṣads in his own manner as it did in the past in the hands of other geniuses.

The Upaniṣads are separate treatises, largely of verses, but sometimes interspersed with prose. There is a certain unity in the various Upaniṣads, but philosophically speaking it is difficult to say if they form parts of one consistent and systematic body of philosophic thought or system of philosophy. They largely consist of utterances welling out of the heart and pregnant with the fire of a deep intuition and apperception. The fundamental teaching of the Upaniṣads consists in instructing or rather declaring through parables and direct statements the existence of one great Being. But there is a great dispute between the various schools of interpreters, such as Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and others as to whether this Being is a personal being or a metaphysical reality. An objective and critical study of the Upaniṣads reveals the fact that the seers and sages who composed the Upaniṣads were not probably conversant with the philosophical distinction and consequences of the concept of a personal God and of a metaphysical reality. A critical and textual investigation would reveal both the lines of thought. This led to the evolution and formulation of different schools of the Vedānta, a definite history of which is available from the 8th Century A.D., but there is reason to believe that from very early times there were differences of opinion as regards the true interpretation of the meaning of the Upaniṣads. The *Gītā* and the *Brahma Sūtra* are the earliest instances of attempts at systematising the meaning of the Upaniṣads, a detailed elaboration of which has formed the bulk of more than two volumes of my *History of Indian Philosophy* and may best be referred to there.

According to Śaṅkara, emphasis is laid on those texts which apparently mean that the Brahman or the ultimate reality is the absolute truth, the absolute consciousness devoid of subject, object and any content, the infinite, which is also identical with bliss (*ānanda*). According to this view, the world of names and perceivable forms is nothing but a cosmic illusion which lasts till the supreme knowledge is attained. The so-called cosmic illusion includes within it the illusory nature both of our individuality and of a personal God to whom prayers may be made. It is only when a person is absolutely self-controlled with regard to the solicitations of the sense with reference to the objective world and the conflict of passions within, and possessed of absolute fortitude and forbearance of pleasure and pain and when he has ceased from all inclinations and is desirous of attaining true liberation that the true knowledge of the unity of our true self with the ultimate reality of pure consciousness, truth and bliss is effected. At this stage there is neither any knower, nor any known, but only a pure enlightenment, which is the final and ultimate kernel of truth inside the world of manifold appearances. This view is combated by various members of the Bhedābheda school, such as, Bhāskara, Rāmānuja and Nimbārka or Madhva and Vallabha. The legend contained in the *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* refers to a refutation of Śaṅkara's view by Caitanya also, though we are not in a position to certify the historical authenticity of the legend. Details regarding the aforesaid authors and many others will be available in the present writer's *History of Indian Philosophy*. But the fundamental position of these writers consists in attributing a super-personality to God, as a personal Being, anthropomorphic in character, who is annoyed when His commandments are not obeyed and who is pleased when His orders are loyally obeyed, who can be approached through prayer and who extends His grace even to the worst sinner, who is the supreme controller of all causality, physical and moral, and being Himself the supreme cause is beyond the operation and scope of all other kinds of causality, which derive their causal power from God. Rāmānuja conceives the relation of God with the individual souls and the universe in the analogy of the control that an individual has over his body. Just as an individual by his will moves any part of his body as he wishes or arrests them at his pleasure, so God also controls all thought and all activity of the individual as He is *antaryyāmin* or the inner controller and He also controls all the natural powers of the universe. The soul is a tiny little creature, atomic in size, which possesses the function of thought, will and emotion. If everything happens by the will-causality of God, man is not ultimately responsible for his action; it is by arrogating to himself freedom of action and of thought that belongs to God that sin creeps in.

It is, therefore, the ultimate duty of every man to love God, seek His grace and to resign to Him all his will and actions (*prapatti*) with a complete consciousness and avowal of his own insignificance. The philosophical and religious attitude of the followers of Nimbārka are very much like those of Rāmānuja. Madhva regards God as a personal Being who is entirely different from the souls and the universe. Vallabha regards the world to be a manifestation of God by His own energy which he regards as *māyā*. But the religious attitude of both Madhva and Vallabha are more or less the same as that of Rāmānuja. For the exact distinctions a reference may be made to the present writer's *History of Indian Philosophy*.

But the religious attitude of Brāhmaism, as may be found in its formulation by Maharshi Debendranath, seems to be rather different from the attitude of the previous writers. Emphasis is here laid on the religious attitude and practically little reference is made to the metaphysical implications. Almost all the quotations and references that are found in Rabindranath's writings can be traced to the compendium called *Brāhmadharma* edited by Debendranath. Thus the book opens with a general summary of the religious attitude of the Maharshi. He says, "that which is the cause of the origin, maintenance and destruction of the world and that which is the root of immortality—that One Eternal Brahman is the goal of my worship, and not anything else created by this thought-power". He binds himself further to devote his life to such conduct as may be dear to Him, with supreme satisfaction. The book opens with quotations from the Upaniṣads and the *Rudrādhyāya* of the Yujurveda. The opening verse as translated runs as follows: "Thou art my father, may you teach us like a father; adoration to thee. May thou not destroy me." In the Bengali translation he further adds: "May thou protect me from ignorance and sin and may thou not forsake me." This additional translation, however, is a sort of interpretation of the Sanskrit passage—*mā mā hiṃsīḥ*—which we have translated—"may thou not destroy me". The verse continues "May the shining Creator remove all our sins and may all the good come to us. Adoration to Him that produces happiness and good, the source of good and still further good". The next passage is adoration to that shining One who exists in fire and water and who pervades the whole world and who exists in herbs (*oṣadhi*-seasonal plants) and trees. Then comes meditation of God. God as truth, knowledge and infinite; Brahman who shines as bliss and as eternal and undying—as peace, good and one—this is the content of meditation. But in the translation Maharshi goes much further than the meaning of the above text. We are obliged to say that the Bengali portion as translation or rather interpretation is not guaranteed by the above text. (*satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ*

Brahma, ānandarūpam amṛtaṃ yad vibhāti, śāntaṃ śivam advaitam). The interpretation runs as follows—*yini āmāder sraṣṭā pātā o sarvasukh-dātā, yini āmāder jīvaner jīvan o sakal kalyāṇer ākar, āmrā yāhār prasāde śarīr man, yāhār prasāde buddhibal, yāhār prasāde jñān o dharma lābh kariyāchi, yini āmāder śarīr o man ātmāke nānā prakār vighna haite sarvadāi rakṣā karitechen*;—*yini satyasvarūp, jñānasvarūp, anantasvarūp paramabrahma, tini ānandarūpe amṛtarūpe prakāś pāitechen. tini śānta, maṅgal o advitīya. ananyamanā haiyā prītipūrvak svīya ātmāke sei advitīya maṅgal svarūpe samādhān kari*.

It will be seen that the interpretation of the Upaniṣadic passage *om satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma, ānandarūpam amṛtaṃ yadvibhāti* is certainly not quite loyal to the text. The Maharshi in his interpretation says that Brahman is the protector, creator and the giver of all our pleasures. We know from the Upaniṣads that Brahman is there regarded as our creator, maintainer and destroyer, and we have in the *Brahma-sūtra* also *janmādyasya yataḥ* and this concept of Brahman is drawn from the Upaniṣadic passage *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti yat prayanti abhisamviśanti, tat vijijñāśasva tad brahma* (i.e., from where these beings are born and by which those which are born are living and where at last they finally merge and enter, enquire about that, that is Brahman). But we do not get anywhere, from any passage of the Upaniṣads, the statement that God gives us all our pleasures and happiness. We do not get also the statement that we have got our body and mind, our intelligence and power, our knowledge and religion from God. We do not also get the statement that God is protecting our body and mind and soul from various dangers. The passage *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma* does not justify this interpretation. The Maharshi had himself come to this conception partly by his own thoughts and partly from what must have filtered down to him from Raja Rammohan Roy's teachings.

Raja Rammohan Roy defining the principal creeds of Brāhmaism says, *paramēśvareḥ niṣṭhār samkṣep lakṣman ei ye tāhāke āpanār āyu evaṃ deher ār samudai saubhāgyer kāraṇ jāniyā sarvāntaḥkaraṇe śraddhā evaṃ prītipūrvak tāhār nānāvidha smṛti-rūpa-lakṣmaner dvārā tāhār cintan karā evaṃ tāhāke phalāphaler dātā evaṃ śubhāśubher niyantā jāniyā sarvadā tāhār samīha karā arthāt ei anubhav sarvadā kartavya ye yāhā karitechi, kahitechi, evaṃ bhāvitechi tāhā paramēśvarer sākṣāte karitechi, kahitechi evaṃ bhāvitechi*.

The most important contribution of Raja Rammohan Roy was the revival of the Vaiṣṇava conception of God on the Upaniṣadic basis, attributing to Him the possession of knowledge, feeling and willing and

regarding Him as the bestower of all the natural blessings of life as well as the calamities and as the bestower of the fruits of all our actions. This revival differs from the old Vaiṣṇava conception in two important ways. First of all, the conception of Vaiṣṇavism in the Gauḍīya school which immediately preceded and was current in Bengal at the time of Raja Rammohan Roy over-emphasised the emotional aspect and demonstrated it in songs and *kirtanas* and trances and epitomized the Kṛṣṇa legend with their Vaiṣṇava faith. Lord Caitanya since becoming a *Sannyāsin* by his continuous craving, emotional excitement and intoxication and the expression of a madness of love for Kṛṣṇa, illustrated the true nature of *bhakti* or devotion in his life. A true devotee according to him should completely abnegate himself and feel the sorrow and pangs of separation from Kṛṣṇa. The pathological states of this love, as they are closely parallel to erotic pathology of ordinary love in which passions lose their carnality and are chastened into pure love, are variously described in the *Ujjvalanīlamanī* and other works. This idea of such a love, however, is no special character of the Vaiṣṇavism of the Gauḍīya school. We find that the Āḷwars of South India in the 6th and the 7th centuries showed a similar earnestness and intoxication of love for Kṛṣṇa. Such a state of devotional excitation is described in *Tīru-vāy-mōri* as follows:

Day and night she knows not sleep—
 In floods of tears her eyes do swim.
 Lotus-like eyes! She weeps and reels,
 Ah! how without thee can I bear ;
 She pants and feels all earth for Him.

Again,

Blissful Lord, heard I; anon my eyes in floods did run,
 Oh what is this? I asked. What marvel this? the Perfect one,
 Through friendly days and nights, elects with me to e'er remain,
 To union wooing me, His own to make ; nor let me "lone".

In the course of these expressions the personages in the legendary account of Kṛṣṇa's life are freely introduced, and references are made to the glorious episodes of his life, as showing points that heighten the love of the lady-love, the Āḷwār. The rapturous passions are like a whirlpool that eddies through the very eternity of the individual soul, and expresses itself sometimes in the pangs of separation and sometimes in the exhilaration of union. The Āḷwār in his ecstatic delight visualizes God everywhere, and in the very profundity of the attainment pines for more. He also experiences states of supreme intoxication when he becomes semi-conscious or unconscious with occasional breaks into the consciousness of a

yearning. But, though yearning after God is often delineated on the analogy of sex-love, this analogy is seldom carried to excess by studied attempts at following all the pathological systems of erotic love. It therefore represents a very chaste form of the expressions of divine love in terms of human love.

Much more sober is the non-erotic devotion of Māṇikka-Vāchakar for God as master and the devotee as the slave, as a few quotations from Pope's translation of the *Tiru-vācha-kam* will show:

And am I not Thy slave? and did'st Thou
 not make me Thine own, I pray?
 All those Thy servants have approached Thy
 Foot; this body full of sin
 I may not quit, and see Thy face
 Thou Lord of Īiva-world!—I fear,
 And see not how to gain the sight!

There was no love in me towards Thy Foot,
 O Half of Her with beautiful fragrant locks!
 By magic power that stones to mellow fruit
 Converts, Thou mad'st me lover of Thy Feet.
 Our Lord, Thy tender love no limit knows.
 Whatever sways me now, whate'er my deed,
 Thou can'st even yet Thy Foot again to me
 display and save, O Spotless Heavenly One!

Again,

Honey from any flower sip not, though small
 as tiniest grain of millet seed!
 Whene'er we think of Him, whene'er we see,
 Whene'er of Him our lips converse,
 Then sweetest rapture's honey ever flows,
 till all our frame in bliss dissolves!
 To Him alone, the mystic Dancer, go;
 and breathe His praise, thou humming-bee!

Much more sober and more impregnated with reasoned appreciation is the devotion of Raja Rammohun Roy with reference to the personal God, whom he adored out of gratefulness for the good that mankind received from Him and the majesty of God as the creator, maintainer and the destroyer of the universe.

Raja Rammohan interprets some of the texts from the Upaniṣads such as *yato vā imāni, tamevaikaṃ yānatha, tameva viditvā, tadviddhi praṇi-*

pātena (Gītā) as injunctions for meditating on Brahman as the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. He quotes from Yajuhśruti *yo'sāvasau puruṣaḥ so'hamasmīti*. He also quotes from Yogi-Yājñavalkya *devasya saviturvarcco bhargamantargataṁ vibhum / brahmaṁvādinu evāhurvareṇyaṁ cāsya dhīmahi // cintayāmo vayaṁ bhargaṁ dhiyo'yo naḥ praco-dayāt / dharmārthakāmamokṣeṣu buddhivṛttī punaḥ punaḥ // buddheś-codayitā yastu cidātmā puruṣo virāt / vareṇyaṁ varaṇīyanca janmasaṁsārabhīrubhiḥ /*. The purport of the *gāyatrī*, which formed the fundamental creed of Raja Rammohon Roy consisted in the belief that the Super-soul who is the controller of the sun is identical with our own inner controller and that he moves our thought and intellect towards the main springs of life's desires and he alone can save those who are afraid of birth, death and continual re-incarnation. Thus our real prayer consists in conceiving of the identity of the highest reality with ourselves. In the tract *Brahmaniṣṭha Gṛhasther Lakṣaṇ* also the Raja quotes from Manu certain passages and concentrates upon the necessity of meditating upon the identity of Brahman the highest Reality and ourselves. But though the Raja thus stressed upon the meditation of the unity of the self with the highest Reality we often indulge in the notion of a personal God and ignore the contradiction of such a view with a metaphysical identity of the self with the ultimate Reality.

Again in a song the Raja says that the Brahman is all-pervasive and yet qualityless substance. It is impossible to comprehend Him by direct acquaintance. But on looking at the creation we can infer Him as being the creator. He emphasises again and again in his songs the necessity of controlling all our passions and inclinations and cultivate *vairāgya* or disinclination to worldly things. He regards egotism and pride as being the most fearful enemies of mankind. He refers to the Upaniṣadic passage *dvā suparṇā sayujā* and says that the individual self is essentially identical with the supreme Brahman. The difference only arises out of the fact that the individual soul manifests itself through material conditions or *upādhi*. The fact that God is always showering upon us his blessings though not denied by the Raja yet does not occupy a prominent place in his religious attitude. Had it not been for the personality that he sometimes attributes to the highest Reality, the religious faith of the Raja could have easily been regarded as Upaniṣadism in accordance with the interpretation of Śaṅkara. In certain passages he denies the reality of the individual soul and its difference from the Brahman and regards the individuality of our existence as being due to a *upādhi* or condition. We know that according to Śaṅkara's interpretation Brahman alone is real and everything else of the manifold universe together with our individual souls

are due to *upādhi* or conditions of *māyā*. Śaṅkara, no doubt, while interpreting the *Brahma-Sūtra*, regards the Brahman as *Īśvara*, as creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. But he denounces the view that the existence of such a God could be inferred on causal grounds. Moreover, the conception of God as the creator and preserver is according to Śaṅkara only a relatively lower conception of God. In the higher conception all creation and preservation are but false appearance due to *upādhi*. The conflicting element in the Raja's religious attitude is that he does not seem to regard the conception of God as creator and preserver, as being lower and incompatible with the notion of God as pure consciousness.

In many of his songs the Raja is obsessed with the fear of death and suffering and indirectly these appear as one of the motive causes for turning to God.

In the preface to his translation of the *Īśa Upaniṣad* the Raja seems to accept the view of Śaṅkara that Brahman alone is real and everything else in the world is but an adumbration of *māyā*. Thus he says:—*ei sakal upaniṣader dvārā vyakta huivek ye paramesvara eka mātra sarvatrayāpī āmāder indriyer evaṃ buddhir agocare hayen tāhāri upāsanā pradhān evaṃ muktir prati karan haya ār nāmarūpa sakal māyār kārya haya*. But it is curious that learned though the Raja was and though he had read the *Bhāṣya* of Śaṅkara thoroughly and though he himself admits that he accepts the view of Śaṅkara in toto, yet he insists on saying that it is possible to have a knowledge of Brahman. Śaṅkara in interpreting the Upaniṣads and the *Brahma-sūtras* is never tired of reiterating the view that Brahman being Himself of the nature of pure consciousness and all notions such as subject and object, knower and the known being false, it is impossible to know Brahman. Yet the Raja insists on the view that Brahman can be known. The Upaniṣads say *viññātāram are kena viññāniyāt; aviññātāṃ viññānatām, viññātāṃ aviññānatām*. It will thus be seen that the learned Raja has directly contradicted Śaṅkara's view though he says that his interpretation of the Upaniṣads are in accordance with Śaṅkara's view.

In 1835, Debendranath, then at the age of 18, was very much afflicted by the death of his grandmother whom he loved very dearly. A feeling of detachment filled his mind and this detachment led him to seek God. He used to go at this time to the Botanical Gardens and sit there pensive and melancholy. He did not know any Sanskrit at the time but being anxious to learn it he began reading the *Mugdhabodha* and also read portions from the *Mahābhārata*. He read also at this time (1836-1837)

some works on European philosophy, some histories of philosophy, some works of Mettrie and Holbach's *System de la Nature* (in translation), Locke and Hume's *Essays on Human Understanding* and some works of Gassendi and Boyle. Most of these works were of a materialistic nature and particularly Holbach and Mettrie's works regarded man as a product of nature and denied the existence of God. These works did not satisfy him. He learnt from Locke that knowledge consisted in the impressions of external things produced on the mind through the senses. But this also did not satisfy Debendranath as he was anxious to know God. But as he thought and thought on it, it occurred to him like a flash of light in darkness that with the knowledge of all objective things, knowledge of the self as the knower is unavoidable. So after long thought and deliberation he came to the conclusion that with every awareness of an object we have also the awareness of the self. He realised further the majesty of thought as finding expression in individual sentence and regarded the world to be anthropocentric. He thus thought that the sun and the moon rise and set for us, the air blows and the rain falls for us and they all together are serving the purpose of life. Matter cannot have any purpose, the purpose therefore must be of a conscious being. Since there is nowhere else such a conscious being there must be a transcendent conscious being who rules the world. Just after being born, the baby sucks the mother's milk. Who taught it to suck? It must be He who gave it life. Who instilled the mother's mind with affection? Certainly it must be He, who gave milk to her breast. There must be a God therefore whose knowledge is purposive. It is by His control that the world moves. When he came to this conception, the pangs of futile search largely subsided.

In the Upaniṣads we hear of the government of the world by a great Being—*etasya praśāsane gārgi*; we hear that out of His fear the wind and the other powers of nature and even death continue to work. But the Upaniṣads never say that the control of the universe is intended for the benefit of man. There the purpose of the Master that runs the phantom show is inscrutable. His purpose fulfills a law. He controls all the faculties of man, all his inner senses and life. He is the power that works through wind and fire. Like sparks in fire, or like webs coming out of a spider, the universe has sprung into being from Him, but that the universe should have a further purpose does not appear in the Upaniṣads. It was in the later philosophy of the Sāṃkhya that the anthropocentric teleology wedded with the doctrine of Karma formulated the dogma of universal teleology. But the teleology of the Sāṃkhya and in fact of most Indian systems of philosophy is much wider in as much as it regarded

the world of matter to be subservient to the interest of the world of spirits and that all that was living was endowed with spirits—the animals and even the vegetables. There again this purposiveness of Nature was a law inherent in Nature. It did not conceive that there was a conscious Super-person who for the good of man or of the living beings imposed the law on the material Nature. There was a law but not a law giver. It is exactly the position of science. Behind this teleology there was a moral purpose—the sense of justice that all selves or souls must suffer or enjoy according to their good or evil deeds and must also have the supreme privilege of liberating themselves from the cycle of births and the bond of good and evil which it is their supreme destiny to transcend. The purpose of Nature—the brute and material Nature is ultimately directed towards the fulfilment of moral justice as the attainment of a super-moral state. In the Nyāya also the idea is more or less the same, though it admits a God and holds that God as a moral judge so wishes that the first action of the atoms starts on a purposive line for the fruition of moral justice. The Vaiṣṇava thinkers agree generally with this position but add that God is not absolutely bound by the moral law of justice but He can exercise also His special powers of grace on particular occasion and overstep the limits of the moral law. Some Nyāya thinkers also admit the power of grace of God.

But the position of Debendranath does not go into the depths of metaphysical implications. The position therefore is more akin to that of Christianity which through a large period of its history was practically devoid of any metaphysics. The system of regarding God as father seems also to have a taint of Christianity in it. It is no doubt true that in the Ṛgveda we have texts—*sa mama bandhu janitā* and the like, but nowhere in the later philosophical literature, nor in the Upaniṣads we find any system of worship where God is looked upon as father. A passage in the *Brāhmaḍharmā*—*pitā no'si, pitā no bodhi*—is in all probability a composition of Debendranath. Even in Rammohon Ray this idea seems to be absent. It seems therefore probable that the Christian idea that had been floating in the air preached so often from so many pulpits by the enthusiastic missionaries must have left their ring in the subconscious mind of the young lad.

It so happened once that as Debendranath looked at the starry heaven and the expansive magnitude of the canopy over our head extending far and wide beyond our comprehension, it occurred to him that such an infinite and limitless space, with the limitless spangling stars could never be the creation of a finite being. There must be a creator

of this universe and He must be infinite. All things of this universe are transient and changing; its creator alone is unchanging. This creator has not only ordered the universe but He has created it out of nothing by His will. The metaphysical and logical weakness of this argument is indeed too evident to require any discussion. But the most noteworthy point here is this that Debendranath here also does not follow the Raja or any Hindu idea. The Hindu idea is very definitely against creation out of nothing. In the Sāṃkhya-Yoga and the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika matter has a beginningless existence. It produces new combinations or evolves patent forms out of latent tendencies but is never created by any body. The fundamental principle of *Satkārya-vāda* is that existence can only come out of existence and nothing can come out of nothing. We have a similar Greek formula 'ex nihilo nihil fit'. The doctrine of will-causality and creation out of nothing is almost wholly an idea foreign to Indian mind, though the idea is quite a commonplace with the Semitic mind. This idea is accepted by the Jews, the Christians and the Moslems. It seems clear that here also Debendranath shows a Christian tendency in his speculation regarding the origin of the world.

In the *Brahmasūtra* (II. 1) the question of Brahma-causality of the universe is discussed. It is said that everything is Brahman which means that the ultimate cause of the universe is Brahman and as such it is changeless pure consciousness and all that appears are false and the plurality of the world is due to false knowledge. In Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahmasūtra* (II. 1. 18) the idea of production out of nothing is definitely refuted. The causality of the Vedānta is distinguished from the causality of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga as the view that the cause alone is real and the transformations that appear are wholly unreal and mere appearances, and their only metaphysical reality is the cause, while according to the Sāṃkhya-Yoga causality consists in the fact that the changes that the cause undergoes are as much real as the cause itself. Thus from Brahman the only cause, all other things have a semblance of being produced, just as from milk or the water the curd or the ice is produced, and for this no instrument is required; or just as the spider spins out his web the Brahman has in Himself various powers by which the apparent creation is produced. According to the Book of Genesis and particularly according to Isaiah (45. 6, 7)—"I am Jehova and there is none else. I form the light and create evil; I am Jehova that doeth all these things." In the New Testament the divine creation of the world is presupposed in many sayings of the Lord and His apostles (M.T. 25. 34, L.K. 11, 50; J.N. 17. 24, E.P.H. 1, 4). The Father is regarded there as the source of all things. Faith grasps the fact that the world has been

framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things which do appear. Instead of the doctrine *ex nihilo nihil fit*, we have the doctrine *ex nihilo facit illa Deus*. The tendency of modern criticism however is to interpret the Bible as not being in favour of creation out of nothing. But to Debendranath the metaphysical difficulties of the situation did not occur at all as he had but little training in systematic philosophy. It occurred to him that God created everything out of nothing merely by His will. Having come to this conclusion he felt that after all he has come to a solution of the problem that was worrying him for a long time. Later on he thought that he got a confirmation of his views from the *Īśa Upaniṣad* from the verse *Īśāvāsyam*, which says that we should cover everything by God and should be happy in enjoying only that which has been given by Him. From this he came to the decision that learning all other things he should remain only with God. Thenceforward he studied the thirteen *Upaniṣads* and drew the inspiration of his religion therefrom. Later on about 1845 he was happy to discover the two texts *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma, ānandarūpamamṛtaṃ jadvibhāti* and regarded them as describing the nature of God. He also collected other texts and interpreted some of the texts as appeared to suit his own conviction. Thus he says "According to the *Brāhma Dharma*, the cosmos is not the form of the *Brahma*, but He is the creator of the cosmos". He also regarded *Brahman* as our liberator and as pervading all space and He was beyond all time. It is curious to observe that if *Brahman* was the creator of all He must have created also space, and for this reason and also for the reason that He is spiritual and formless he cannot pervade all space. He also regarded God as good, which tallies both with the Christian and the *Vaiṣṇava* concepts. But in both these concepts, as a rule, God as goodness is limited by the moral law and the sense of Justice. He was also impregnated by the idea of the *gāyatrī* that God was the *antaryyāmin* or the inner controller of our inner being. But Debendranath did not grasp his religious dogmas merely by thought but by an intense emotional living through the truths that appeal to his conviction. But Maharshi Debendranath showed himself the messenger of the new light of the West, the light that showed the supremacy of individual experience and individual thought above all scriptures, in a more significant and emphatic manner, than even Raja Rammohun Roy. For the Raja had taken the scriptures of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Vedānta* as the gospel. It also appears from a study of the Raja's work that he believed in the authority and the validity of the *Upaniṣads*. But as Maharshi Debendranath's studies became more extensive he realised that he could not agree with all that was said in the *Upaniṣads* and that it would be wrong to

establish the foundation of his religion on any scriptures. A true religion must be the religion that shines in one's heart and in one's spiritual experiences, rational and ennobling, holy and penetrating. Being a monotheist, he disapproved entirely the doctrine of liberation of the Upaniṣads as interpreted by Śaṅkara. It appeared revolting to him that a man could be identical with God. He did not believe in the ordinary doctrine of transmigration; he thought that if the sinners in this world did not confess their sins and repent and continue to commit sins, he would pass into the world of the sinners; and after having suffered there for his sins, when all his sins are washed away by his sufferings, his virtues whatever they may have been would take him to a higher world and there he would continue to strive in the world of the virtuous in a path of eternal progression. The virtuous however directly pass into the world of the virtuous, where there is no animality, no desire, no greed, no anger and no ordinary springs of desire and there he continues to strive onward attaining more and more knowledge, virtue and love in the eternal path of progression and they would never come back again on earth. The eternal progression consists in greater and greater realisation of God with complete self-consciousness. There with the new life made holy by the mercy of God, in love, joy and knowledge he becomes associated with the eternal love, joy and knowledge of God just as a shadow is associated with light. This is a never-ending association which never ceases. This is a man's highest goal, his highest joy, the *summum bonum*.

In his sojourn in the hills in 1857-58, in the snow-capped hill-tops of the Himalayas, all alone, he enjoyed the compresence of God in him and in nature. He used to study at this time, as the editor of his autobiography says, the Upaniṣads, the works of Hafiz, Kant, Fichte, Victor Cousin, the Scottish Intuitionists and Newman. After deep meditation he came to the conclusion, firstly, that the fundamental principles of religious truth are known *a priori* and are not derived as the product of individual experience; secondly, that they therefore are self-evident, because they are established in spiritual experience; and, thirdly, that they are universal for all time. It is on the basis of such universal principles revealed in all religious experiences that the sages of the Upaniṣads held the view that the world expresses the glory of the Lord and that it is by Him that the world moves. The world flows in the life of God and it is supported in His life and He alone sits in our heart. We see the tree before us and touch it, but we cannot touch the space that it occupies. As time passes branches come out of it, twigs, flowers and fruits; but the time that holds them all in unity cannot be seen. The vital force by which the roots draw the sap from the ground and

which permeates through every leaf of the tree cannot be seen, though its effects are visible. The omniscient Person by whose will the tree has attained its vital power pervades it through and through, but we cannot see Him. The supreme Person lies hidden in every object but is not manifested. Our senses can grasp only the external things but they are helpless in perceiving the inner reality. It is only by meditation that this supreme Being can be intuited. In this meditation Maharshi Debendranath felt that he had a vision of God in all, not merely in the eyes of religious emotion but in the light of knowledge.

In reviewing the religious career and thought of Maharshi Debendranath, it must be borne in mind that he was almost from the very beginning a rationalist and as such the object of his quest was a deity, who could be by his own rights the object of a free man's worship. Suggestions from Christian and other sources may have sown their seeds in the inmost garden of his mind, but when its flowers bloomed in their glory over the level of his consciousness looking towards the sun and the heaven, no one could have the heart to enquire into the region where the roots had sunk. The blooming flowers were there, and they captivated the minds. In reality the Maharshi was not even aware that they had any roots. He thought that they were like the flowers of the orchids which had bloomed forth all on a sudden by the force of his contemplation. As these thoughts were no mere playthings for him, no mere luxury of a table philosopher, but was a matter of earnest sincerity for the vindication of which he was prepared to risk all that was dear to him. He naturally sought for corroborative evidence from other thinkers who may have had the same experience as he had. In the course of this investigation, he came across the Upaniṣads, which largely corresponded with his views. It must also be remembered that the breaking of the old chains in those days must have been a difficult operation. We thus find him regarding the Upaniṣads and the Vedas as gospels and also accepting the Vedic form of rituals with regard to post-funeral operations. It was a stage when he had not yet been able to tear asunder all the bonds of custom. He quarrelled with the Christian missionaries and even with many prominent men of his own circle in justifying the validity of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. But even then it is doubtful how far he regarded the Upaniṣads and the Vedas as revealed works in the sense in which Hindus understand it, or in the sense in which the Bible or the Qu'ran are regarded as revealed works by the Christians and the Moslems. The main criterion of truth with the Maharshi was the revelation of a pure rational heart. He regarded the Upaniṣads as valid because he thought that they were the repository of

such experiences of holy men as are akin to his own intuition. He did not regard the Upaniṣads, probably even in his most orthodox days, to be a work without an author or as a work composed and instructed by God and revealed to man.

Throughout the whole course of his spiritual quest we find the spirit of a modern man when he refuses to acknowledge uncritically the authority of any scripture or of any man. He accepted the Upaniṣads because they appeared to him to be reasonable and which therefore were in agreement with his own experiences. As he began to discover that the Upaniṣads contained many weak utterances which were not consonant with reason, he did not hesitate to deny the absolute validity of the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads were only valid in so far as they agreed with the testimony of his own free consciousness. We have anticipations of this attitude in the writings of many mediæval saints like Kavir, Dādu and others, but in Maharshi Debendranath we find a very clear cut and definite attitude towards the instrument and criterion by which a quest of truth should be made and its value adjudged. The orthodox Hindu attitude, however, had to a large extent possessed even the mind of the Raja that the Vedas and the Upaniṣads are without an author and therefore self-valid not because they were attested by the test of our reason but because they transcended the limits of our reasoning power.

It must also be borne in mind that the quest of the Maharshi was not the quest of a philosopher but of a person whose whole existence depended on his religious convictions. His principal creed was that the truth of God could be perceived by an *a priori* universal testimony of a holy mind which revealed to him the nature of God as a creator out of nothing, preserver and destroyer of the universe, who being good in himself is always working for our good, who by His powers has pervaded all inanimate and animate forms of life, whose existence can be inferred from His manifestation in the universe, but whose nature can never be known except through deep meditation. He believed also, that the highest goal of a man's life was the continual quest of God's association through love and knowledge, and this destiny man is bound to perform in his post-mortem existence in newer and nobler lives.

V

THE POSITION OF RABINDRANATH'S PHILOSOPHY

It is difficult to take the first start with Rabindranath. It is like an ocean where one has lost his compass. It is difficult to discover the details of the first period of his life when the juvenile and yet the precocious mind of Rabindranath was fighting with his own environment and where the environment was leaving its stamp on him. From all we know it seems that he was not much in touch with his great father with whom his relation was more of awe and reverence than of intimacy. From the character of Maharshi Debendranath, as reported by Rabindranath himself in his *Jīvan Smṛti* it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the family of Rabindranath was surcharged with a sort of religious fervour that the Maharshi possessed. But Rabindranath's mind was virile and passionate, ambitious and plodding, incipiently conscious of his greater powers and unwilling to accept any defeat. But above all an inner capacity for feeling deeply and intensely and a temperament superlatively sensitive and yet duly regulated by rationalism—a mind which could easily reflect within itself the yearnings of the time-spirit, freedom and individuality—characterized the mental background of Rabindranath. His early sojourn to Europe by which he could enjoy experiences of an entirely new dimension than that with which he would have been hemmed in if it would have been his lot to stay in Bengal alone, endowed him with a new capacity of transcending the limits of the monotonous existence of the Bengali life of those days. He was a musician by gift and even in his early age of adolescence he could feel the pulsations of musical throbbings in his heart as spontaneously as a cuckoo or a nightingale. Yet he was more than a cuckoo or a nightingale in this that he could spell the message of the music as distinguished from the message of the words. When he tried to learn in Europe the ordinary European music and the Irish melodies he could distinguish in them the tendency of the new age to unburden its passions in a manner entirely different from that with which he was familiar in Indian music. The tendency of the Indian music was not a subjective unburdening of the depths of passion but the discovery of a harmony of nature with its varying shades and the varying degrees of eloquence that enchant us with their visions and songs at different parts of the day and the night. The mark of his early individuality could be felt when he charged Indian songs with European tunes and music—a process

the suggestion of which must have been deepened by the music experiments of his brother Jyotirindranath Tagore. According to his own confession, his *Vālmiki Pratibhā* was the first attempt to express his soul in terms of this newly-coined music where literary expression sank far away in the penumbra of the torch of the music. His mind at this time was boiling with emotions of infinite subjectivity that could ideally transcend all obstacles in the very depth of the subjective experience. His *Bhagnahṛdaya* which he started writing in England was an illustration of this. The poet was at that time only eighteen in the twilight of dawn, when the light of the morning had not cleared up the misty haze of the darkness that was gradually dispersing, when the real world was transferred into a world of fancy and a world of dream; when we live in an unreal world, which superimposes itself upon the real and when fancy has a greater charm than reality. The pleasure and pain of this life is like the pleasure and pain of a highly-spun dream, when the mind refuses to compare and attest one's feelings with reality and when the feelings of one's own mind, the fancies that one weaves, are like the world of a magician appearing as the ultimate reality. From the age of fifteen or sixteen to twenty-two or twenty-three the poet passed through such a stage of emotional subjectivity, when the exaggerated form of emotion and fancy lived and moved about without contradiction and were more real than any real thing; the various functions of the mind and the various orders of experience were not differentiated at this stage; it was like the early age of the earth, when water and land were in a stage of formation and differentiation of rising lands and submerged continents, of shadows and shapes that are mutually unfamiliar to one another; when the inner powers of man crowded together for liberation and manifestation and in their very crowding baffled their own purpose. Nothing is impossible at this stage, for, the bondage and limitation of the reality, the order that is inexorable, or obstacles that are impassable, are unknown. The poet himself compares it with the state of a teething child who feels that he can break everything under his teeth. The onrush and conflict of these inner powers can never realise their end, until they are differentiated and strengthened and until the consciousness of the objective world of reality grows. In the conflict of the passions the inner *antaryāmin* becomes stifled and such strangulation produces toxins that vitiate the whole expression. The higher aim of art is lost sight of and the expression of the passions becomes a supreme end.

The romantic literature of England inspired his young mind. English literature from the time of Shakespeare (e.g., *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Hamlet* and the like) often unburdened the internal

storm without bringing them in any close harmony with the consummation of an optimism that believes good to be the ultimate end. This is indeed a contrast which may often be noticed when the English literature as a whole is compared with Sanskrit literature. In *Sakuntalā* for example we have the unburdening of the passions, free flow of lust from the city overflowing the peaceful cottages of the hermitage. The mischief is done and repaired by burning penance which evaporates the flow until clouds are formed in the heaven where the earthly passion is again transmuted into sober and holy love in another divine hermitage.

Bengal at this time was intoxicated by the wine imported from England. The very contrast fostered this incursion. Life in Bengal is as a rule as uneventful, as unvariegated as a little stream hemmed in between the high banks of the village, gliding slowly towards the sea. Its load of water is little, its mud is deep and its meandering course arrests its rapidity, but when the flood of the sea rushes at the mouth, the narrow river-bed can hardly accommodate the devastating volume of water which breaks the banks and inundates the peaceful villages. So it was in Bengal which was tame and calm under the oppressive bonds of social and religious repressions, family conventions and customs and relations of superiority and inferiority. The foreign literature shipped from the west bombarded against its weak walls and tore open the old shackles and fire had lit up the thatched houses of bamboo-groves where doves had built their nests. The contrast may well be illustrated in the birth of Rabindranath as the son of Maharshi—the spirit of the East had given birth to the spirit of the west. With the advent of the new age the drowsy and dormant, the pent up and the repressed emotions found a new channel through which they found a way of escape in torrential outbursts. But the difference between the natural outburst of emotion in the English and the French literature and in the Bengali literature at the time was great. The passion displayed in English literature was a reflection of their history but in the case of Bengali literature the spirit was an imported one. It had no resonance with the surrounding environment. It was not the natural cyclone of a summer evening, it was a counterfeit cyclone produced on the stage for a spectacular show and as such it had not the ring of truth and sincerity. It was often slower and tamer than the real and often exceeded the real and the natural. The self-control and sobriety that characterised the display of passions in European literature was therefore often forgotten by their imitators in Bengal. A distinction must always be made between the luxury of passion and passion as it is sincerely felt.

There are instances of people who have no religiosity of heart and character but who may be readily intoxicated by religious songs and dances. Many people do not often feel the necessity of gripping at a truth and cannot even distinguish between a sincere experience of a passion and a camouflage automatically produced by a mnemonic association. European literature at the time was under the influence of rationalists like Mill and Bentham, Mettrie and Holbach and atheism and agnosticism became one of the ruling currents of thought. But that current of thought drew its life and spirit from the gushing spring of the revival of rationalism that succeeded the Renaissance. There were Galileo and Newton, Copernicus and Rousseau, and the whole air was surcharged with the spray of a tidal flood that had started from beyond. But in Bengal the atheism and agnosticism of most of the young thinkers were not the product of a real rationalistic enlightenment of the country but a pseudo-rationalism which they picked up from the teachings of Derozio or by a study of Mill, Bentham or Comte. It is for this reason also that while on the one hand the mass of Bengali upper-class men lay sleeping, spending their time in luxurious ease and unthinking dogmatism, strongly fettered in the meshes of superstitious cults and customs while the old learning had except among few sunk in the mud almost beyond hope of recovery and when even the name of the great philosophical and literary works of the past was almost forgotten, there arose on the other hand a band of young men, who had taken to English studies and had been stirred up to mad intoxication by the Western ideals of thought. It was only a few persons like Raja Rammohun Roy and Maharshi Debendranath Tagore who could assimilate the West without being thrown off their feet—who had a solid foundation in the grounds of Indian culture, who could on that basis try to build a structure after the western pattern modified according to the eastern need. A large majority of others, though often intellectually gifted became mere enthusiasts and iconoclasts in thought. There were people who attacked the current traditional religion not because they had a greater faith and a greater and a more refreshing insight into the deeper problems of life but because they enjoyed tearing assunder the faiths and convictions of others. Like a child who had picked up a sword they would go about testing the teeth of its steel on every innocent plant and shrub that would fall in its way.

Born in such an age Rabindranath in his first poetical attempts lived in a world of passions, which were the mere resonance of his young blood intoxicated by reading western poetry and was bent upon giving expression to them in the juvenile period of his composition. A flame of revolution was lit up in his heart and he gave vent to his poetic instincts in making his

language a vehicle of this fanciful illusory fire ; this pseudo-passion was not the sacrificial fire at the altar of human experience and wisdom, but a consuming fire that burns and wrecks the nerve. But a true son of the modern spirit as he was, he carried with him the conviction of a growing individuality which trusted in the possible exploits of his own adventure, rather than link himself with the tail of others to seek refuge and protection under the wings of the old tradition. He had a consciousness of the truth of the experience of his own heart even when these experiences were but mere ebullitions of emotion, which were mere whirlpools, which revolved round and round themselves and could be lived through as a mere internal welling up and a purely subjective excitement. The poet himself in his own reminiscences refers to an old poem of his, in which he says—“My heart is my own, I have not sold it to any body, if it is broken and lost, be it as it may, my heart is my own”, and alluding to it he further says that there was no reality which could break his heart. It was a fancied breaking of the heart, which became the subject of enjoyment in poetry. In his *Vālmiki Pratibhā* and *Māyār Khelā*, he had already begun his experiments in adapting English tunes to Bengali words and felt elated at the discovery of the new composition. He was thus making headway through new fields and was stimulated with the spirit of literary adventure.

The poet was at this time lost in the forest of his own heart. The forest was shadowed with darkness of trees with their intertwining branches which embraced the darkness with its thousand arms. Not having a direct message from his inner consciousness his attempts at poetry were at this time taking their direction from the immediate encouragement of his readers and associates. His individuality was at this time passive and dallying merely with the fancied emotions which showed him no light but took him more and more into the subjective depth of his heart from which it was difficult for him to find the way out. But dissociated from his own surroundings and living all by himself for a time, he gradually discovered himself and spurred by the momentum of a real feeling and a real inspiration his poetic genius manifested itself in new forms and like a gliding stream danced along its course in new rhymes, breaking new grounds by freeing itself from the traditional bonds and the types of old poetic forms, which had so long served as models and patterns. The poems of his *Sandhyā-saṅgīta* are therefore particularly memorable as the first adventure of the poet, when he was becoming slowly conscious of his powers. In form and matter the poems of the *Sandhyā-saṅgīta* may not be of a high order but it was the harbinger of the morning light when the birds do not leave their nests for the open sky on their unfurled wings, but when they chirp within it and feel the urge of their wings for rushing

outside. There is a pensive tone in many of the poems of the *Sandhyā-saṅgīta* which reveals to us the fact that the poet was becoming conscious at this time of his great destiny and he was fluttering within himself as to how he might escape the walls of his own limitations, like a bird that grows its wings within a cage, and feels in the strength of its wings its power of soaring high in the sky, but being unable to do so, pecks at the bars of its cage in sad disappointment; or like a volume of water that rushes from a mountain spring and whirls round the cavity of the rocks unable to break through the stony barrier. Shortly after the writing of the *Sandhyā-saṅgīta*, a new revelation of his inner consciousness dawned on the poet. In describing the dawning of this revelation the poet says that one day as the poet was walking on the roof of his house and the shadowy evening was enriched with the parting rays of the sun it appeared to him that the world had become bathed all at once in a new beauty. He pondered over it and discovered that the cause of this new appearance was not merely the beautiful rays of the sun and the tender evening, but a new spiritual fact. He felt that the evening was not so much in the objective world as over himself as it had covered his own egotism and his own vanity. So long as he carried his own egotism with himself the world could not appear in its true light, and now leaving the self aside he could look upon the world beautiful and joyous in its true perspective. Immediately following this he describes another experience of his when he was standing one morning on the verandah of his house and looking at the gardens at a distance from behind the foliage of which the sun was slowly peeping out. It appeared to him as if a black veil was withdrawn from off his eyes and he felt as if the world was floating everywhere in joy and beauty. The pensiveness that had penetrated into the crevices of his soul vanished in a moment and the light of the world poured in his eyes. It was the day on which he wrote his *Nirjharer svapnabhaṅga* and he was filled with a joy in which the whole world appeared dear to him. It was as if he had a vision of God in his poetic inspiration and intuition. The effect of this enlightenment was immense, and it seemed to have determined a very great part of his life and character and his literary enterprise. It was like a ray that penetrated through the outer covering of men and things and made their inner being transparent to him. Everyone that passed on the street from the richest to the poorest appeared to him to be wonderful, as if they were but waves upon a dancing universe. It was a vision of things through the inner consciousness not through the eyes. Even the trifling episode, the most trivial occurrence of young men laughing in the streets appeared to him like the frothy foams from a deep-sea of joy that rocked the cradle of the universe. They did not appear to him as indivi-

dual events, but as parts of the whole. He would imagine in one moment all the pulsations of activity throughout the world bubbling in a dance of joy and beauty, which was the essence of the world we live in—the cow grazing in the field by another cow, the mother carrying the child, friends laughing with friends appeared to him not as trivial episodes, not as the commonplace of every day life but as whistling forth the echoes of a great infinity.

He expressed this idea in a couplet:

The doors of my heart have suddenly gone open
The world has crowded in with embracing hands.

It is not a mere poetic fancy but it was the expression of a deep feeling, which the poet could but feebly voice. This delight and joy was not a mere joy of external natural scenery; and the poet tells us that when immediately after this he went to the Himalayas, the grandeur and splendour of that royal mountain could hardly improve the tone—it was an opening of the veil of his heart, a true enlightenment.

His feelings however were more undifferentiated, incoherent and in-co-ordinate, than differentiated, coherent and co-ordinated. Yet the very indeterminateness of the joy was its subjective infinity and indefiniteness, which he sought to express through his verses, his cadence and the music of his rhyme. It was difficult to reduce them within a definite content and meaning from intellectual point of view; he believed that the object of poetry was not always the intellectualisation of an idea, or the utterance of a thought but to signify the pulsation of a heart throbbing with an emotion that lay beyond words. The criticism that has often been made regarding many of his poems that they are often meaningless and contentless, is not denied by the poet; for he held that the words, phrases, the rhyme and the cadence were not always the vehicle of an intellectual content, but of an emotional enlightenment, which was deeper than words, deeper than rhymes and deeper than the intellectual content; it was but the outward expression, an echo within the sphere of limited functions of words of the unlimited and infinite intuition of a felt-whole and the poet himself may fail to accord any meaning to it. It was from here I suppose that the poet began to feel a real experience of an infinity of a subjective enlightenment, the plenitude of a felt-whole, the limitless surplus within us, that could not be corked within the meshes of our thought, but could express itself through the finite conjunction of words and phrases, their arrangement and order, their rhyme and jingle. The poet had written a poem at this time called *The Echo* (*Pratidhvani*)

and his friends failed to see any meaning in it and the poet himself failed as well. It was the echo of an yearning; and has yearning a meaning? So long as the world was looked at in a piece-meal fashion, the parts could be joined in intellectual schematism, but now the light within had transformed the 'without' into a whole of experience, a feeling, that from some deep cavern of the heart streamed out melodious tunes and flowed into the valley of time and space, and from there returned into the heart as an echo from that which had flowed from within.

It is this echo of the finite as flowing towards the infinite that makes our mind yearn for the beautiful. When the musician with his full-hearted ease sends forth streams of music flooding the air around and the same is reverberated back through the ears, it redoubles the joy. The world is the creation of joy, music and poetry, flowing from the divine musician, and going back unto him and in its passage as it flows through our individual centres of consciousness we can feel more deeply and rapturously the divine music of which the world is a divine manifestation. It is the realisation of this transformation, this process of the manifestation of the infinite into the finite and its return into the infinite that gives us joy. It is there that our mind is drawn into the current towards the infinite and feels a yearning towards its supreme destiny. The depth of yearning that we feel in the apprehension of beauty here realises its meaning. The tune that starting from the infinite runs towards the finite is alone the stream of truth and the stream of the good. It is definite and orderly. It is the echo of this return flow from the finite to the infinite that is beauty and joy. This yearning is indefinable and intangible. It is for that reason that we pine so deeply and yet cannot say why we do so.

In the first stage when the deep yearning is felt in its absolute indefinability we wish to grasp the world as a whole. We forget that the world as a whole would always elude our grasp in its totality and our efforts to cover it with our emotion would be a mere waste of energy. When with the advent of the rains, water accumulates in the mighty cavities of the Himalayas, so long as it descends in a torrential flood uprooting the trees and carrying the mighty boulders, it is only devastating. It is only when it follows a definite course and makes its way through a definite channel combining the different streams that had gone astray and flows down in its definite path as a river that it is beautiful and good—it is no longer devastating, it grows the crops, supplies water to the thirsty and purifies the polluted. It is through the manifold and the many, the concrete and the definite that the indefinite yearning of the soul, that in the stage of the adolescence seems to crumble the heart

into pieces, finds at last not only its way of escape but its fruitfulness. This unknown yearning more or less comes to every sensitive heart, when by the urge of its wings it feels itself like the fabulous Rok bird or the Garuḍa which would cover the whole sky by its spreading wings like the clouds of a summer evening ; it feels that it cannot do it, the reality recedes from the ideality, its yearning sentiments grow deep and deep and it feels that it must do something, it must attain something, it must achieve something. Many a young man and woman must have been led into many dangerous paths without being able to grasp the meaning and import of this yearning which must take its shape and form, slowly and slowly, by the warmth of thought and judgment, by the slow expression of will, through tremendous obstacles of the concrete world until it can discover its way in the heavens flying inch by inch, with the fatiguing flutter of its wings and continues a sojourn till the end of its days. As it flies, the very flight, the very victory over the obstacles and the pain of the crushing defeats, must reveal to itself the path of its destiny and glory. The poet was at this time at this crisis, when he felt the enlightenment and the yearning, but he had come at this stage at a positive synthesis and the end of the early cycle. This early cycle began with an ebullition of fanciful emotions, unreal and unfathomable, passions that are created from out of nothing by the harmonic flow of blood of early youth. But this pent up emotion as it tried to express itself unconsciously discovered its unreality and there was the conflict that produced a ring of pensiveness so characteristic of *Sandhyā-saṅgīta*. This characteristic passed over to a new phase with the revelation of a new enlightenment when he became self-conscious. He discovered that the root of the obstacle was his vanity and egotism ; he must free himself from them and witness the spectacle of the universe like a disinterested spectator. He realised further that there was something in his inner soul which streamed out into the emerald grassy lawns, the green foliage of trees, the flower beds around him, the deep-blue sky above and that the same stream returned into his own soul, passed through him into the infinite and it is only when he could place himself at the junction of the streaming flow that he could attain joy and fulfilment. He realised that the purpose of his poetry should be the expression of the throbbing pulsation of the heart, which was but an echo of the manifestation of the divine music, from which the world sprang into being and passed back into him. This was like a first sojourn from inside the heart ; later on it passed through various alleys and lanes, vales and dales and through various types of music and tunes did the poet come in contact with the external nature and from stage to stage manifest himself more and more richly and concretely in his message to the world. But each succeeding

epoch of progress has been more a gradual deepening of the first epoch herein described rather than the ushering in of new types of development. In his childhood nature was very near to his mind and the darkening clouds of the evening edged in various colours filled him with intoxication. The early hours of the morning, filled as they were, with the tumult and hubbub of the bustling crowd, filled him with joyous thrill and the long summer mid-days of cloudless sky and oppressive heat kindled in him a spirit of deep detachment and the darkness of night opened the magic gates of diverse fancies. While Debendranath's contact with nature was joyous and majestic and though he loved nature in his own manner the true value of nature with him was the revelation of a greater majesty of God whom the nature indicated as her creator and sustainer. Through every drop of sap that pervaded a tree he perceived the message of God. He thought it impossible to see the divine hand and presence in the world with our ordinary eyes and intelligence, though we may everyday perceive the visible forms of His manifestation. But Rabindranath in those days did not concern himself much about God. His was a passionate soul which after vainly fluttering in deep subjective immediacy one day found its escape, when he realised that the true yearning that he felt so deeply consisted in the fact that his inner spirit which was infinity in itself poured out into the objective world and reflected from there back to his heart and it was this reflection that was a source of joy and beauty and it was this stream returning home into his soul that constituted the internal yearning that he felt. The infinite manifested itself into the finite and through the finite forms and returned into the infinite. As he says this discovery was his own and it was the passion of this discovery that was a true revelation for him. We find here a ring of Hegel's philosophy, of the spirit expressing itself in sensuous terms and coming back to itself through a new transfiguration which was for Hegel the definition of art. The philosophy of Hegel had at this time spread its influence in England not only on the philosophers like Bradley, Caird, Stirling and others but also on poets and writers like Coleridge and Carlyle. It is not unlikely that the poet might have caught the suggestion somewhere and in and through his revelation of the particular morning's joy, the truth behind the suggestion became all on a sudden living; for though we have a general agreement with Hegel's fundamental doctrine, the special manner in which the enlightenment occurred is not only peculiarly Indian but also religious, for in describing the special characteristic of this enlightenment the poet says in his reminiscences that he felt as if every one that passed on the street was dear to his soul. The revelation had not only an artistic side but an

intensely religious side too, inasmuch as it enabled him to realise the feeling of the brotherhood of man which is the greatest message of all religion. In Hegel we do not find these two parts combined together as but two aspects of the same experience. Rabindranath has therefore always characterised every true art as also being good.

In a much later work Rabindranath says that while the altruistic good of the animal world is for the purpose of race-preservation only, man has an element in him which seeks good for itself. It is on this tendency in man and this superfluity, which is not required for his biological purposes that the ethics of man is founded. So man has a super-fluity of emotional energy which is not required for his self-preservation, which he wishes to express for the very joy of expression alone. "When a feeling is aroused in our hearts which is far in excess of the amount, that can be completely absorbed by the object which has produced it, it comes back to us and makes us conscious of ourselves by its return waves." Rabindranath thus assumes that in knowledge, energy or emotion man has a surplus element or fund which far surpasses the ordinary needs of his body and mind. When an animal looks at the world he requires nothing more than to see the immediate object before him and to accommodate himself accordingly. But when the adult man looks at the world his impulse for knowledge is much greater than the immediate necessity of knowing the object and this leads man to the cultivation of knowledge as it is and for its own sake as may be exemplified by the acquisition of science. So man feels emotionally very much more than may be required for biological purposes. This surplus emotion cannot remain at rest but creates joy in expressing itself in objective forms through images, ideas, instincts and the like and as it returns to consciousness its purpose is fulfilled and we have the apprehension of beauty. Rabindranath regards this surplus of feeling as the personality of a man. Though one may have all sorts of objects to deal with in art these are but mediums through which one tries to express himself—his inner personality, his emotional self. Tagore calls this inner fund of emotionalism personality. Tagore says that it is where the man is organic and has the inherent power to select things from his surroundings in order to make them his own, where he can transmute things into his living structure, or in other words is creative that a man displays his personality. It is the expansive power of this personality, the inner being, that constitutes the greatness of a man. A work of art is that which brings to us ideas vitalised by feelings ready to be made into the life-stuff of our nature. The nature of personality however cannot be analysed but when our heart is fully awakened in love or other emotions

Behind all the forces of nature there is a spring, a source from which all the life and energy of nature, a sort of personality emerges. When the poet approaches nature it is not the separated phenomena of nature only, the mere sunshine or a blooming flower, or a pouring shower that captivates him, but he is in direct communion as it were with nature almost as a living person. It is the contact of the two personalities as it were that forms the essence of poetic inspiration. To a poet therefore it is not the details, discrete and separate, that have their appeal, but the whole—the whole of flowing life and flowing joy.

This flow of life that the poet perceives is not a mere biological concept ; it is a spiritual concept of the infinite in its concrete form. Tagore says that the poet of the Upaniṣads had said that no movement of life would be possible if the whole sky was not full of infinite joy. It is as real to the poet as the earth beneath his feet.

Tagore says, "In India, the greater part of our literature is religious, because God with us is not a distant God ; He belongs to our homes, as well as to our temples. We feel His nearness to us in all the human relationship of love and affection, and in our festivities He is the chief guest whom we honour. In seasons of flowers and fruits, in the coming of the rain, in the fullness of the autumn, we see the hem of His mantle and hear His footsteps. We worship Him in all the true objects of our worship and love Him whenever our love is true. In the woman who is

good we feel Him, in the man who is true we know Him. In our children He is born again and again, the Eternal Child. Therefore religious songs are our love songs and our domestic occurrences, such as the birth of a son, or the coming of the daughter from her husband's house to her parents and her departure again are woven in our literature as a drama whose counterpart is in the divine." Tagore thinks that the function of our personality consists in transforming everything with which we may have any concern into the human. It is by this activity of the superfluous in us that art is produced.

Tagore thinks that in our life we have two elements or sides—the finite and the infinite. The finite is that which consists of our economical and biological aspects. The other is the aspect of our aspirations and longings which are inexhaustible—the infinite. This is also the side of human immortality. Where man feels his infinity he is a creator. Out of the God's world he makes his own. It is only here that man is in contact with the supreme person. This creation of man is not a creation of matter or force or mere facts of any order but is the creation of beauty. Facts no doubt form their basis but that which gives life to these facts is the joy that flows from within. It is in this way that our creation surpasses the creation of God, because it is a creation of our personality. It is conscious of its infinity and creates from its abundance.

We see here that Rabindranath still holds in 1927, when his "Personality" was published, almost the same view that became living to him in the period of his life, when he was writing his *Prabhāt Saṅgīt*. We remember that the poet interpreted the enlightenment of a particular morning as the outrush of something that overflowed the world and made the world more than it was—a world of joy and friendship. He also described it as the infinity of his own soul passing into the finite things of the world and expressing itself in its diverse forms, and returning to him; it is this story of the infinite, out of its own inner craving overflowing into the field of the finite and expressing itself through the finite and ultimately returning to his own soul. This theory of the internal source of surplus energy, the inexhaustible expression of joy that out of its own inner necessity transforms itself into the finite and ultimately returns into the soul that constitutes the true personality—the surplus and the infinite.

In his 'Religion of Man' Tagore says that man alone has an ideality in him by which he gets an inner push to go beyond himself such that no animal does. The savage man paints himself to look more gorgeous dignified and majestic. The civilized man irresistibly feels something higher which

only could give him worth. He has an unceasing desire to outstep his normal limitations of power, just as a savage is anxious to attain greater power through magic. There is thus an ideal representation of man, a humanity infinitely bigger than what it is or seems to be. He has a feeling that his reality far exceeds himself. The call from within is deep in his mind ; it is the call of his own inner truth which is beyond his direct knowledge and analytic logic. As our consciousness more and more comprehends it new valuations are developed in us, new depths and delicacies of delight, and the sober dignity of expression, through elimination of tawdriness of frenzied emotions and of violence, appear. The religion of man is thus to be sought not in his gods but in the dream of his own infinity. The theology that man invented in his earlier days only supplied him with an emotional pastime and not with spiritual inspiration. It therefore fell far short of his personality, the mission of which is to reveal humanity from the background of the eternal. It has taken man a long time to discover the nature of his own spirituality and the various religions through which he has passed have the common characteristics that man has sought through them, his own supreme value, which they have often invested with an anthropomorphic character. Such an anthropomorphic outlook distorts the truth of man and like all mistakes in other branches of knowledge they have to be fought against and overcome. The conflict of religions throughout history often shows, says Rabindranath, how the cult of power is superseded by religions that have superior spiritual value. But it is also probable that these older religions, when they recognise the power that pervades the world, regarded it to be the demonstration of a superior will and personality behind nature, for man could not stoop low before an abstract power, which is lower than himself.

In another chapter Tagore gives us his positive conception of the 'Infinite' as that unity in which the many and the multifold through which it expresses itself falls far short of its nature ; the beauty of a lotus is more than the flower in which it is expressed, and this is the infinitude of beauty, but in comprehending the concept of this infinite, mere magnitude is not the determinant. The criterion is to be found in the quality of harmony, which produces in us the positive sense of the quality of the infinity. It seems however that Rabindranath seldom tries to give us any close and logical interpretation of the concept of 'infinity', which is the very essence of his view of life and nature. Even in his Hibbert lectures he seems to depend for his radical concept of 'infinity' upon the vision and experience that he had at the age of 18. In that particular morning he felt that all things which were like disconnected waves vagrant and transitory, had obtained the meaning in his mind in relation to a

boundless sea. He felt sure that some being who comprehended him and his world was seeking his best expression in all his experiences uniting them into an everwidening individuality which is a spiritual work of art. He argues therefrom that the great creative mind that was shaping the universe to its eternal idea was also shaping his own experiences. But since he himself was a person it had one of its special centres of a personal relationship growing into a deepening consciousness. He felt that through all his sorrows and sufferings he was passing through the labour of creation. He felt himself as an impartial spectator witnessing the mystery of a meeting of the two in a creative comradeship. He felt that here was his religion, where the 'infinite' became defined in humanity and came close to him so as to need his love and co-operation and this idea of his he expressed in a later poem called *Jivan Devatā*. In another place in his Hibbert lectures he speaks of a personal relationship when on many occasions in the early hour of the dawn he ran to meet the sun's rays glistening over the dew-drops. He felt in such companionship with the sky, the morning breeze and the light, a larger meaning of his own self when the barrier vanished between him and what was beyond himself. He further says that when the physical world of protons and electrons, of trees, herbs, streams and mountains are looked upon from an objective point of view we miss there an important truth about them which we discover in them in our love and joy. It is not merely the number of protons and electrons which represents the truth of an element. It is the mystery of the relationship which cannot be realised. We are made conscious of this truth of relationship immediately within us in our love, in our joy, and from this experience of ours we have the right to say that the Supreme One who relates all things and comprehends the universe is all-love—the love that is the highest truth being the most perfect relationship. In another place he says, "I had a vague notion as to who or what it was that touched my heart's chords like the infant which does not know its mother's name or who or what she is. The feeling which I always had was a deep satisfaction of personality that flowed into my nature through living channels of communication from all sides". He tried to emphasise the idea that in spite of the differences that exist in the worlds of things among themselves and between us we are conscious of an organic unity between them and us, such that we can easily trust in the testimony of our inspired moments when we feel that there is but one life that manifests itself in us as well as in the objective world—an all-pervading personality answering to the personality of man. He held that the world consisting of the animate and the inanimate found its culmination in man, its best expression. Man as a creation represents the creator and this is why of

all creatures it has been possible for him to comprehend this world in his knowledge and in his feeling and imagination and to realise in his individual spirit a union with a spirit that is everywhere. A rose is beautiful to us not because of its roundness or its pink colour but because we find here the language of love that is spoken to us by someone who has a great concern in giving us delight—it has borne home to us a message conveyed through a magic touch of personality. A beautiful thing is of greater value to us than an object of utility because through it we are in an intimate contact with the person whose streams of joy have flowed out and created the rose. We carry a rose to our beloved because in it is already embodied a message which cannot be analysed. Again he says, in the region of nature by unlocking the secret doors of the workshop department one may come to the dark hall where dwells the mechanic. In this dark hall there may be the secret of the world mechanism, but the hall of union is there where dwells the lover in the heart of existence. We are reminded in this connection of the import of the poet's work *Rājā* or 'The King of the Dark Chamber', wherein in all the pageant of the show the king was not visible but he was visible only by the beloved lady in the dark chamber where all lights were out.

The poet says that in his early days he was appointed a secretary to the Brāhma Samaj founded by his father. He took part in the services by composing hymns which unconsciously took the many-thumbed impression of the orthodox smudge of tradition, but though he tried to persuade himself that he was in harmony with the members of that association, he gradually began to feel that he was not loyal to the religion of the institution. This institution represented a standard truth at its static minimum and zealously guarded any growth and progress. But in religion and art nothing should be guided by the mass opinion of a community, for religion and art are peculiarly the field of the solitary communion of the individual spirit. After a long struggle the poet had to cut his connection with the Brāhma Samaj. He felt that religion did not consist in the crudity of details or pure metaphysical rarefaction. Religion was above all an all-forsaking sincerity—an intense yearning of the heart for the divine in man. Temples and mosques obstructed the path and in the babble of the teachers and the priests the voice of God cannot be heard. All rituals and ceremonies and dogmatic beliefs were an obstacle to the streaming out of the soul. The fundamental creed of his faith consisted in perceiving God in himself—the God that dwelt within us as an unfathomable reality, and we can meet him only by unlocking our inner doors. Yet this meeting with God though it takes place in the solitary cavern of the heart can at the same time so transform the person, so expand his love that in its

tidal flood the whole world is deluged with a new insight, a new pulsation of feeling so that everyman comes to his heart appavelled in a celestial light. The lesson of God is not to be taken from scriptures of written books but from the scriptures of the heart. When the heart is flooded with such a direct apperception and intuition of the divine that the truth and reality of the objective humanity becomes directly intuitive and this rouses profound feeling of longing and love. This intuition of humanity and our relation with it through direct acquaintance and intuition lets loose the spirit of kindliness in such a manner as cannot be dreamt of in the traditional conflict of social morality. It is for dignity of being that we aspire through the expansion of our consciousness in a great reality of man to which we belong. By an earnest and sincere sympathy we participate as it were in the lives of our fellow beings. With such a participation, religion inevitably concentrates itself on humanity which illumines our reason, inspires our wisdom, stimulates our love and claims our intelligent service ; and this God which pulsates in us through all humanity and through all universe by our participation in their essence cannot be a God of duality, a personal God who is different from me, but it is the God who is the essence of my being. I cannot adore and worship Him any more than I can worship myself. We can only enter into His life and find our being transmuted into a new order of reality, of joy and love. Any way, we have not to find any God who has any metaphysical or physical existence outside our selves. Our world is as it is in our comprehension. Everything would be lost into unconsciousness if man were naught. The inner response that we have is a true meaning of reality. Nature is not that which exists outside but what is in our thought. The Supreme Person that exists in us is that which exists in all. It is by such an apperception alone that we can perceive all men in God and God in all men. We must merge our reality in the reality of the supreme Being, who is at once my own inner being, and it is in this that we can have a true vision of religion.

We have seen that according to Tagore personality means the transcendent principle of unity within us, essentially of the nature of feeling and interest by which our various experiences as well as the diverse functions of our faculties are integrated together. One of the most important human facts is our craving for the limitless. The manifestation of a craving for the infinite is the very presence of the deity in us. So long as we have faith in this fundamental function of our being we can be creative and our life can be spiritual. Our own spirit is an image of the eternity and it is therefore pregnant with an infinite attraction for the limitless, which itself communicates to us through this divine hankering.

But this hankering, this call of the infinite remains only barren so long as it does not manifest itself through the concrete and the finite. Our personality by its fund of joy and love must develop itself by assimilating within it the finite and the concrete and thereby enrich itself. The true process of growth is not by accumulation but by organisation, not by acquirement but by becoming. It is in the process of such becoming that the whole universe can be our material. The reality of our own self is immediate and indubitable to us. The consciousness of this real within me seeks for its own corroboration the touch of the real outside. We have to stream ourselves out to the objective world and discover a personality there with which we can be in direct communion. So long as we look upon matter as mere inert passive being, we perceive that element in it which cannot awaken our interest in them except for the sake of utility and biological needs. It is only when we perceive nature as pregnant with life and spirit that we can communicate ourselves to them and grasp them as a part of our being. Even man remains passive and inert like a stone or a chip of wood so long as we do not enter into him by our sympathy. As soon as I know a person to be my own, my attitude towards him is immediately changed. Our culture and civilization are very largely the creation of our creative personality. Whenever this creative action fails and the animal reality predominates we find humanity descending into barbarism. Man is eager that his feeling for what is real to him must never die, it must be imperishable. The consciousness of the self is so intensely eminent to man that he attributes to it the character of immortality. So it is that when we put a greater value to our egoism than to our essential self as the all-pervading reality that we attribute to us cycles of birth by which we can give a full play to our egotistic tendency.

We thus find that on the objective side Tagore believes that the world is the manifestation of a great power which has been evolving the world after its own pattern and which achieves its culmination in the creation of man after its own image. So far of man as involves the mechanical and the biological side which man has in common with the animals he belongs more or less to the objective world. But so far of man as transcends his biological and purely intellectual nature there is a surplus in him which forms his real essence. This essence is a creative personality in man which is like an echo and replica of the universal self of which it is a creation and of which the universe is also the creative product. Through this surplus man and through the universe, the universal self is continually recreating itself and manifesting itself in diverse forms. It is only by the functions of our creative personality that we come in contact with nature as reflecting the creative activity of the great person behind it. In every

act of comprehending the essential truth of the universe as a creative mode of the super-person our own personality has to stream itself out and transform its nature in its own perspective. It is only by such a transformation that in recognising in the universe elements of our own nature that we are filled with joy and love. This perspective does not consist in the mere particularity of the details, but in the recognition and appreciation of a richer relatedness between ourselves and the world that our comprehension of the world becomes a part of our personality. Whatever falls below the level of the apprehension by our personality is mere information and a mere nothing—an accumulation of irrelevant facts that cannot enter into the organic being that manifests itself in man and in the world. Infinity of our personality consists in its infinite craving for creation which is but another form of making the world its own. It is for this reason that this creative personality and its operation has often been identified as love, for love is an operation by which that which was foreign to us becomes our own. In the creative operation of the infinite Person as an infinite creative activity we have for its 'other' always the finite, for it is only through finite forms that the creative function can realise itself. The finite, therefore, though apparently opposed to the infinite is a step in the onward march by which the finite becomes a part of the infinite. Our own essential personality is representative of the great super-person, who has expressed himself in any particular centre. In our essential personality therefore we find a touch of the super-person who manifests himself through the infinite activity of my personality. The aspect of my personality therefore at once reveals the dual personality of the super-person and the human rolled up together in love and joy.

The fundamental difference between the philosophy of the father and the son is that the father was led by the ordinary cosmological argument of design to believe in a personal God who created the world out of nothing—a semitic attitude, and regarded the world as the product of the majestic power of God whose energy permeates through the world. Man, a tiny figure of His creation, is by duty bound intellectually to comprehend the majesty of the Master and to resign his own will to that of His. In the early stages of Rabindranath's thought he was in a sort of conflict and confusion by his great reverence for his father and the interpretation that he gave to the Upanisads, the holiest of all scriptures. It is true that the father being a monotheist found it difficult to accept the Upanisads in toto and preferred the testimony of his own experiences. This reliance on the testimony of one's own experiences as being of greater value than the messages of the scriptures marks his cessation from Raja Rammohan Roy and also from the orthodox schools of Hindu

religion. We have but little doubt that this was the result of the first impact of the liberalising western thought on the dormant orientalism of Hindu orthodoxy. Tagore also took his stand on the testimony of his own experiences as being of greater value than anything else. But his poetic nature was filled with passion from the very beginning. His love of nature was stupendously sincere through all his poems. In *Kaḍi O Komal* and *Mānasī*, we find an evidence of the dialectic of passions. We have elsewhere discussed how the virile muddy passion associated with lust and eroticism gradually revolved and revolved and purged off its dirt and began gradually to sparkle in purity. Following the course of this inner dialectic of passion we find how the lustful part of it soon revealed its smallness and filled the poet with a sense of detachment and left him craving for a passion that was infinite. The element of lust is the element of particularity, the element of matter, which cannot be swallowed up or dissolved by the spiritual element of love. By his own experiences he discovered that the lustful element was unspiritual and must be given up, if one has to be loyal to the infinitude of craving that is essential to true love. Side by side with it on particular occasions he had visions of his positive infinity in the realisation of his inner personality which seemed to him to send forth beams of ethereal light which bathed the darkness of the objective world which always opposes our subjective personality as a barrier of darkness. The man in the street, the tree in the corner, the house-tops shining in the sun are entirely indifferent and indeed opposed to our spirit which cannot make them its own. They are like stray images hanging in the intellectual compartments having no meaning for our own personality. It is only when our inner person streams out and overflows them that it can dissolve them in the juice of its own nature before it can assimilate them. It is a common place biological knowledge that most food have to be turned into sugar by the internal physiological mechanism before it can be assimilated into the system. So the milk of our sympathy, the divine fluid, must flow from us and transmute the objectivity into a part of our personality before it can be assimilated into our nature. It is only when all that is objectively concrete and material is transformed by our streaming fluid that they can be tasted with relish by our soul; it is this tasting with relish, this inward returning of the streaming fluid that appears joyful to us and reveals beauty. Beauty is infinite because it is an organisation of concrete relatedness of the whole—our own personality and the objective world—an organisation which is very much more than the parts of which it is constituted, and this surplus portion is wholly unanalysable and testifies to its existence in our joyful experience. Our spiritual commerce with the objective world is a continual act of

creation of the great super-spirit through our human personality, which holds within it by legacy the infinitude of creative power that is possessed by the Master.

From what has been said above it will appear that Rabindranath is an idealist. In this connection we propose to define idealism as a theory both epistemological and ontological. On the epistemological side it holds that contributions of our mind affect the nature of reality. This is the minimum requirement. In the maximum extent it may hold that all reality is mental or spiritual. In the minimum requirement it holds the proposition that reality is at least partly mental or spiritual. All idealists generally believe in the existence of an ideal or Absolute, a sort of a supreme state which represents the ultimate reality. Consequently most idealists believe that our ordinary comprehension of things is at least partially illusory. These two descriptive characteristics may be illustrated by a reference to idealists of India or of the West. That the first characteristic of idealists applies to Rabindranath we shall presently see ; whether the second characteristic also applies to him or not is a matter for later discussion. Over and above the mind Rabindranath believes both in an individual spirit and a super-spirit which manifests itself in the former as well as in the universe. He seems to regard this ultimate super-spirit to be a Person who by His creative activity has on the one hand produced the world and on the other hand our individual selves as a replica of His. Our individual self being a replica of the super-person is itself a person and has a creative activity by which he creates a world of his own out of the objective data. He thinks that all that comes to us through our senses or gathered in universal concepts by way of scientific knowledge can be called facts, but not all facts rise to the level of truth and reality. He thus makes a distinction between mere facts and events and what may be called truth or reality. A fact can only be real or true when our spirit has penetrated into it and transformed its nature by its creative activity. A mere man in the street or a passing shower or a blooming flower is in the order of mere facts and events. But in themselves they are vagrant and separate and have no meaning for us. It is only when we can bathe them with a milky stream of sympathy, love or joy that they assume a new form and become a part of our personality and can be called real. Artistic creation as well as the creation of religion has thus for him the supreme value of reality, for it is there only that we can extend our personality. The extension of personality is not a mere accumulation or acquirement but it is a becoming. In assimilating the external datum our personality integrates it as organised with itself in a multifold order of relatedness. It is this that construes truth that has value. Nothing that can penetrate into

our personality has any value for us. They are mere facts or events but they are not truth. In a passage in *Bhāṣā o Chanda*—he says—all events that happen are not truth. Speaking of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and its poet Vālmīki, Nārada is made to say that the mind of the poet is a far greater truth and a truer abode of the hero Rāma—than his actual place of location in Ayodhyā. But though the poet did not attach any superior value to facts and events which are not transformed by the creative activity these could not have been regarded by him as absolutely false and non-existent. But we can appeal to certain passages of Tagore wherein he admits more than two kinds of knowledge. One kind of knowledge, he says, is that which we gain from other men and the other kind is that which we attain by observation, experiment, and process of reasoning. These all are efforts to take that which is away from the observer and related to himself. In these things our mental and physical energies are employed in a manner quite contrary to that of meditation. “The highest truth is that which we can only realise by plunging into it. And when our consciousness is fully merged in it, then we know that it is no mere acquisition but that we are one with it. Thus through meditation when our soul is in true relation with the supreme truth, then all our actions, words, behaviour become true.” I would however add here another kind of truth of a superior order than the first and the second but lower than the third referred to above. This is the truth of aesthetic creation. In the first and the second, knowledge of the external world comes not like particles entering through a window but by the activity of the mind together with its contributions without which there would be no knowledge and nothing would be existent. Rabindranath however does not discuss this problem elaborately anywhere but from his strong utterances we may consider it as implicit in his mind that without the operation of mind nothing has any being or existence. In a passage from a *Baul* writer which he quotes approvingly in his *Religion of Man*—it is said that without consciousness everything is dark and nothing exists. If this view is correct we should say that Tagore is in implicit agreement with the theory of Berkeley that the doctrine *esse est percipi* is true of all unthinking things. We append the condition that the doctrine *esse est percipi* is only true with reference to all but thinking things because in one passage Rabindranath definitely says that we are indubitably certain of our own selves. He feels no hesitation to say that the existence of his own self is undoubtedly true. And for the truth of this assertion he depends on the testimony of his own self and nothing else. Tagore does not say anything regarding the gradation of two kinds of awareness, awareness of the testimony of others and awareness of a scientific order

through reasoning. But we may take the liberty of assuming that he would regard the first as being the weakest of all kinds of knowledge. His father had also discredited it by discrediting the value of the Upaniṣads merely as scriptural evidence although in the first period of his life he had clung to the Upaniṣads as ultimately valid. In his second period he had attributed the final validity to whatever appeared to him as apodictically certain on the evidence of his own consciousness—a position which was so far as I am aware first put forward by Descartes. Descartes we know started by doubting everything and ultimately discovered that since doubting cannot be doubted and since doubting was a form of thought, the existence of thought cannot be doubted and since it was indubitably certain that thought existed on the evidence of thought, it was also certain that the thinker also existed, *cogito ergo sum*. That Rabindranath very largely discredited mere traditional opinions however holy they might be is evident from many of the references scattered in his writings. In his scathing criticisms against the traditional forms of Hinduism in which customary beliefs and scriptural texts had supplanted independent thinking and in all his strictures against current Hindu society, Rabindranath carried the red banner of a rational revolution. He is the most eloquent advocate of free rationalism. Thus we may well assume that he regarded the first type of knowledge as the least true. The second type of knowledge namely that of science was next in order of reality and truth. Science and reasoning being based on rational thought and abstraction we have here a contribution from our own mind. The next in order is artistic creation such as poetry and music wherein our inner personality grasps the external data not as an acquirement but as an enlightenment of the personality, through its creative function, its joy of self-elaboration and its perspective of harmony and unity in multifold relatedness. But the highest truth is the truth of religious meditation, wherein a person plunges into the heart of reality. As an instance of it he refers to the meditation of the *Gāyatrī*—*oṃ bhurbhuvahḥ svaḥ tat saviturvareṇyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt*. He interprets its meaning as follows: The first part of it from *oṃ* to *svaḥ* would require one to think of the earth, the air and the starry regions and to set one's mind in the heart of this universe, and to realise that one is born in the infinite and that one does not belong merely to a locality but to the whole universe. The second line from *tat* to *dhīmahi* refers to the meditation upon the adorable energy of the creator of the universe. One has to bring within his conscious vision the vastness of the all and then to realise within oneself the fact that God creates this world from His infinite creative power at every moment of time continuously and not by a single act. This power is not abstract.

It is the infinite will belonging to a supreme person and this cannot be an abstraction. This person manifests his power on the one hand as the earth, the sky and the starry heavens and on the other hand as our consciousness. "There is an eternal connection between one's own self and the world, because this world has its other side in my consciousness. If there were no conscious Being and no supreme consciousness at its source and centre, there could not be a world." This passage definitely proves our previous statement that Rabindranath had a full sympathy with the Berkeleyan position.

He further says that God's power emanates and streams forth as consciousness in me and also in the world outside. The interpretation of our knowledge as subject and object are really effected by us, but in reality these two sides of creation are intimately related, as they proceed from the same source. The general purport of meditation therefore is the realisation that one's own consciousness and the vast world outside are one. This unity is to be found in the great person who breathes out consciousness in an individual person as also in the world outside. Even nature therefore has a supernatural principle behind it as its basic reality and it is that same supreme person who manifests himself together with his creative function in our own personality, which on the one hand is finite and on the other hand infinite in its longings and passions. Our meditation leads us to realise the unity of our consciousness with the vast world outside.

But Rabindranath denounces science for it treats the world in terms of abstraction and law and says that through it we cannot understand or realise any thing about ourselves ; for science the laws of body and mind have their background in the universe but personality has none. But our personality is what we know most intimately and if it has no basis in truth nothing else in the world can have it. The fact of my person must have the truth of the infinite person to support it. The immediate perception of 'I' in us proves that there must be one infinite 'I' and that we are in a relationship of love with it. For in love alone we have infinite satisfaction. The supreme person resides in my personality and it is its creative power that functions through me.

Rabindranath believes in a duality ingrained in the unity in man. Turning to European philosophy we find in Pascal a dualistic way of describing humanity. Pascal used to say that it is dangerous to let man see too clearly how he is on a level with the animals without showing him also his greatness. It is also dangerous to let him see too clearly his greatness without his meanness. When he boasts himself he should be abased, and when he abased himself he should be exalted. Pascal introduced into

philosophy a way of thinking which is not wholly of pure reason, because there was another element, a subtle spirit, a surplus which corrected and supplemented our intellect, and this subtle spirit is something like mystic contemplation and he further held that the operation of this subtle spirit could be testified by all. It was similar to what the philosophers of modern times regard as intuition or interior spiritual life, but the most important names, which are suggested to us in connection with Rabindranath is that of Green and Pringle-Pattison. Both Green and Kant tried to show that in our every day experience and science there is always present in our knowledge a principle which we generally ignore. This principle forms the noumenal background ; and as this principle is ignored neither science nor ordinary experience can give us any intimation of the ultimate reality. They can only deal with the phenomena, which are only partially understood but not comprehended in their full significance. The discovery of the underlying principle in relation to which all phenomena exist and are known can vindicate our ordinary experience and gives us the right of applying the principles of morality and religion to the ultimate reality. The discovery of this principle therefore leads us to a significance deeper than what is given us in ordinary experience. Kant held that the discovery of this ultimate principle was impossible and for it we have to depend on faith. Kant however held that so far as only this ultimate principle can be grasped that we can affirm its existence but we can know nothing about its nature. Green however holds that when we see phenomenal objects in relation to their principles we acquire a knowledge of what they are in themselves. Both Kant and Green however agree that this principle is taking cognizance in our moral experience and that for that reason we can affirm the reality of our moral freedom and of the existence of God, as primary truths on which we can base our existence as spiritual beings. Green endeavours to work out consequences of this principle in relation to morality. In the second book to the *Prolegomena to Ethics*, he tries to discuss the practical life of man as a realisation of freedom, and shows in what ways this freedom is realised in man's actions and particularly in those actions which are morally good.

The most important point in Green's philosophy lies in his assertion that our individuality is a reproduction of itself through an eternal consciousness. This virtually means the affirmation of a unity of the universal with the particular element in the man's being. This also means that man is not merely an object who is a particular part of this partial world, but that he is also a being in whom the principle of unity that underlies all the differences of the world becomes conscious of itself. Man is on the one hand an individual object in the world and on the other a

subject of knowledge and a moral being, who is capable of regarding and treating all objects including himself in relation to the whole to which he belongs. Green thus is more cosmocentric and theocentric than anthropocentric. He holds thus that the conception of man *sub specie æternitatis* is the basis of our view of man as *sub specie temporis*. The criticism that has been levelled against Green is that it is a form of mysticism which loses man in God or an individualism which forgets his relation both to God and to the world. Green holds that the conception of nature as a single and unalterable order of relation has no meaning except to a consciousness having such a conception. It is because our own consciousness is of a related nature that the nature itself appears to be related; such a consciousness cannot also be a product of nature for nature itself is manifested through such a consciousness. It has therefore to be admitted that our consciousness through which alone nature exists is neither natural, nor a product of nature. Now the point is whether this perspective of relatedness, which is the form in which nature appears to us, does really belong to nature or not. If it is merely the work of the mind or consciousness, nature as such remains unknowable and we have two different worlds, that of the noumenal nature, unknowable yet existent and the forms in which it appears to us. 'This will make an impossible gulf between the noumenal nature and our consciousness. 'The only way of escape that is possible as suggested by Green is that the fact that nature appears to us an orderly relatedness is due to a condition lying behind it which renders "the mere possibility" of nature into a "reality" of relatedness. It is this condition which holds the plurality of nature into a unity. 'This condition therefore must be a principle which is analogous to our reason. Nature thus implies a non-natural principle, which we may call the self-distinguishing consciousness and which cannot be subject to the relation which it establishes between phenomena, i.e., it cannot be in time and space or be material. Matter is merely the correlatum of change, a determination which cannot be applied to the spiritual principle.

Human experience is on the one hand an order of event, on the other a consciousness of this order. This consciousness cannot be a part of the process of nature. The ordinary appearance of the process of knowledge or states of consciousness conceals the fact that knowledge itself does not undergo any process. Knowledge may be of events or of phenomena but it cannot itself be an event or a phenomenon. It is the imposition of the contents on the knowledge that creates the appearance that constitutes knowledge as a process. Our perception is the synthesis of all the sensations we may have of the object. The perception thus being a synthetic state cannot also be regarded as a process. Looked at from this

point of view knowledge means a self-distinguishing consciousness which holds its experiences together as related facts, and therefore cannot be a series of events. This view of consciousness implies that consciousness though active is not a series of phenomena and it also implies the existence of an eternal consciousness in man as the basis of the active consciousness. Though our consciousness as a function of the animal organism develops in time yet the consciousness which constitutes our knowledge is the eternally complete consciousness as so far realised through that organism. This does not however necessarily mean that we have two minds in us but it means that we have to apply two different conceptions to understand the reality and the function of the mind, and eternal consciousness must be operative in us to produce the gradual development of our knowledge. The self-communication to us of the eternal consciousness can never be complete because it has to manifest itself in time, through sensuous events.

The subject in whom such an eternal consciousness reproduces itself is like it a free cause ; but this causation is not to be understood in the ordinary sense of the term as invariable antecedent. It is a free spontaneity.

If we now turn to the philosophy of Tagore and compare it with that of Green, we find that both of them admit a spiritual principle behind both man and nature. Nature is regarded by both of them as a product of the spiritual consciousness that underlies it. The spiritual principle in man is also a product of the higher spiritual principle that is present behind nature. But the spiritual principle in man is a replica of the higher spiritual principle from which it has evolved. This evolution however is not an evolution in time, but the spiritual principle of man is involved in the very concept of the higher spiritual principle and it is only so far as the higher spiritual principle has to work through the human frame that it can be regarded as different from it. Green's argument in favour of his philosophy lies on the simple consideration that matter being mere possibility, its appearance in orderly relatedness must be due to the action of our minds, and that if this relatedness and orderliness of nature did not belong to nature, nature would be unknowable—an error into which Kant fell which could not be bridged by him. The other way of looking at it would be that behind nature there is some spiritual principle which endowed it with an orderliness which was discovered by the mind. This spiritual principle behind nature could not be regarded as different from that behind man. This spiritual principle is an eternal consciousness full and complete which however appears in a state of process on account of the fact that it has to appear through the obstacle of time and natural conditions. In man also the same spiritual principle, the eternal consciousness appears as a spontaneously creative agency as the individual.

VI

FROM INTUITION TO PHILOSOPHY

In spite of what has been said in the last chapter, Rabindranath did not arrive at his philosophy through any philosophical argument. He had no training of a philosopher. He arrived at his doctrine through poetic intuition and revelation though writings of the philosophers might have suggested to him the outlines of his thought. Thus the argument implied in his stray utterances and poems is not primarily an argument of logic but of intuition or vision. He says that it once occurred to him in a moment of ecstatic delight that every thing that he looked around him from the commonest grass to the passers-by in the street appeared as bathed in a celestial life as it were. It was this vision of the poet that gave him insight into the nature of his own personality spontaneously flowing and free. Even before this he used to write poetry and good poetry too ; but he had not so long found himself. He divined for the first time that poetry and art was a spontaneous effusion of an ever-yearning creative spirit, infinite in its longings and passions that flowed out to the objective world to flowers and herbs, shrubs and birds, to the dewy emerald grass and the purple sky and to all the humanity around him and in an intoxication of joy he realised them in a new intuition as a part and parcel of himself. His ordinary egoistic and rational self stood aside like a spectator to witness from outside the spontaneous communion. In this vision he also felt that the mute world beside him was all pulsating with life, and as in a wintry dusk, through the hazy cloud of mist one can see the glow of the sun, so through this world of inert matter and living beings he perceived as it were the glowing personality of a super-person whose spontaneous powers was flowing in streams of light and colour and shaping in forms and hues the beautiful world that stood dancing before his eyes. It was this vision, the artist's self-discovery and mystic self-enlightenment that gave him the key to opening the mystery of the universe of microcosm and macrocosm. In one of his poems Tagore says,

The eternal Dream
is borne on the wings of ageless Light
that rends the veil of the vague
and goes across Time
weaving ceaseless patterns of Being.

The mystery remains dumb,
the meaning of his pilgrimage,
the endless adventure of existence—
whose rush along the sky
flames up into innumerable rings of paths,
till at last knowledge gleams out from the dusk
in the infinity of human spirit,
and in that dim-lighted dawn
she speechlessly gazes through the break in the mist
at the vision of Life and of Love
emerging from the tumult of profound pain and joy.

From the testimony of this vision and from the analogy of artistic creation Tagore concludes that true creation is only possible by a Person. It is the joy of emotion stirring up in the breast of a person that can transform unmeaning objects into meaningful relatedness as integrated within the person. There is a point where the meaningful relatedness that is produced by art differs from the relatedness that is produced by reason or rational conceptualisation or organisation. In the former there is not merely the meaningful relatedness or organisation but for the very fact that it is impregnated with the emotion of an infinite yearning and longing of the person, it reveals a unique joy which is of a different order than the pleasure that is felt by the satisfaction of a utility, economical, biological or rational. The pulsation of this joy is apprehended as the joy of the beautiful. The moral good is unique by itself, it cannot be measured by any other kind of good. It is its uniqueness that constitutes its infinity, for infinity is that which is not commensurable by anything other than itself. The aesthetic good or beauty is also in the very same manner unique in itself—an inexhaustible superfluity that cannot be measured by anything else other than itself. It is for that very reason that the infinity of moral good and the infinity of beauty has an appeal all by itself. They are both therefore unanalysable and unthinkable by terms other than itself. A good act done to a person is done for the very joy of doing the good. It should not wait for anything else, no expectation of thanks is needed, if they come they are a superfluity of another order. It is like the case where one has received the full dividend for his share and unexpectedly gets a bonus.

Since the creative action of the person can create the infinity of beauty, it follows that the personality itself is also infinite in itself. This

infinitude is apparent in two ways; firstly in the creation of beauty that is timeless and secondly in the unceasing function of the creative power in the temporal order. Since again our personality has an existence we may consider it as a product of reflection of a super-person. Life is a product of life and life produces life.

The infinity of life consists in this that the whole is equal to the part. The life that is produced as a part of another life contains the same life in its entirety. It is in the same manner that we should conceive the relation of the individual person and the super-person. Looked at from one point of view the individual person is produced by the super-person; but looked at from another point of view it is identical with the super-person. It is the life-spirit of the super-person that flows through the individual person and is responsible for the discharge of his creative function.

The theory propounded by Tagore is to be distinguished from the ordinary creation theory of the world in which God is supposed to create the world out of nothing by his own will, or the theory according to which God by His will charges the first actions in the atoms together with his purpose, or the theory in which matter is originally charged with a cosmic purpose and God by His will only removes the inner opposition of the free flow of energy for organising matter according to its inherent purpose, or the theory in which God by His will has organised the world with a cosmic purpose. For according to Tagore, God the super-person is eternally creating the world both in the objective order and in the subjective order through our own personalities. It is fruitful here to refer to Pringle-Pattison's idea of creation. Creation must be regarded as an eternal act, an act grounded in the divine nature. God is not first God and then creator of the world but *as* God He is creator of the world and only *as* creator of the world is He God. To separate the two ideas from one another is an empty and arbitrary abstraction, affirming in God an unmeaning difference which contradicts the unity of the divine nature. The movement to the finite and the realisation of the infinite in the finite must be taken as the fundamental character of divine life. The relation of the time-world and its process of rise and decay, birth and death, to the divine totality may be regarded as the eternal purpose of God. If the finite world means anything to God, the ideas of activity and purpose are indispensable. If He is not himself creatively active in the process He is no more than the Eternal Dreamer and the whole time-world becomes illusory. Tagore also believes in the reality of the world and according to him decay and death is a return into a cavern of the unknown from which life again in a fresher and younger form renews itself.

Both according to the view of Pringle-Pattison and Tagore the infinite creates the finite and the finite again returns to the infinite through our moral and spiritual experience. The magic drama of creation passes through the inanimate in the animate world in diverse paths and in the different stages of the universe the same creative dance goes on. In the human centres the absolute appears as the finite spirit and through its own creation he creates his own world and through this creation of his own he receives the outer creation within himself in such a manner that he can feel the presence of the great creative spirit without and its identity with what shines from behind its own self. The creative function though apparent in every mental action is most decidedly patent in artistic creation, which is a creation for itself unstirred by biological or utilitarian needs. Tagore therefore has continually reiterated the importance and the exclusive character of this creation that it should be devoid of any other impulse than that of creation itself. creation is its own purpose. It is the urge of creation *per se* that leads to the creation. When God created the world it is the urge of his creative spirit that has brought forth this world. As the human spirit is an epitome of the absolute spirit, its creative function achieves its final projection only when its operation proceeds out of the very overflowing joy of the urge of creation absolutely independent of an extraneous stimulus such as utility or the satisfaction of biological needs. It is for this reason also that Tagore thinks that aesthetic creation and aesthetic apperception is only possible when the mind is free from the disturbing passion which pollutes and affects the spontaneous aesthetic activity with alien elements.

In his article on *Saundaryabodh*, he says, *saundaryake purāmātrāy bhog karite gele saṃyamē prayojan/ saundarya sṛṣṭi karāo asaṃyata kalpanāvṛttir karma nahe/ pravṛttike yadi ekevēre purāmātrāya jvaliyā uṭhite dei tabe ye saundaryake kevalmātra raṅgāiyā tulivār janya tāhār prayojana tāhāke jvalāiyā chāi kariyā tave se chāde/ phulke tulite giyā tāhāke chīḍiyā dhulāya luṭāiyā deya/ saundarya āmāder kṣudhā tṛptir saṅge saṅge sarvadā ektā uccatār sur lāgāiteche jagater saṅge āmāder kevalmātra prayojaner samvandha nā rākhiyā ānander samvandha pātāiteche/ saundaryabodher parinatabhāu kakkhanai pravṛttir vikṣobh o citter asaṃyamē saṅge eka kṣetre tīkīte pāre nā—paraspar parasparer virodhī/*

The creation of beauty thus draws us towards the good. The moral ideal and the artistic ideal pull us towards the same goal. It is because Tagore concentrated himself on the creative activity of the aesthetic type, which requires as its condition the moral detachment from egotism and vanity, jealousy and greed and which required as its positive condition a

spirit of charity and friendship that the question of moral struggle was not taken up separately by him. Moral elevation was taken as a *sine qua non* of the spiritual activity and enlightenment. The fundamental principle of this active creation by which art is created and religious spirituality is attained is love. Misery and sorrow, obstacles and difficulties that are in the path of our progress are but occasions for evoking our creative impulse for overcoming them in a spirit of joy and love. The contingency is in the deepest view contributory to, or rather an essential condition of, the perfection of the whole. But it wears the appearance of a foreign element in which, and in spite of which, the divine purpose is worked out; and it carries with it dangerous possibilities, extremities of weakness and of sufferings which it would be hard indeed to justify, if we considered them as specific parts of a deliberate plan. It is undoubtedly a source of the arduousness of reality. But it is in this arduousness that is rooted the grandeur of the world. If we could have our own choice and we thereby eliminated all pains we should rule out our greatest opportunities. Every day brings us instances of

"Sorrow that is not sorrow but delight,
And miserable love, that is not pain.
We hear of the glory that redounds
Therefrom to human kind, and what we are.

'Tagore often says,
Oh thou cruel,
You have done well to bring sorrow unto us.
Let thy flaming fire burn in my heart.
The incense of my inner temple
Would not send forth its fragrance
Unless you burn it;
Unless you fire it up, my lamp would not give light.

Without the rude shock of sorrow
Life remains blunt and unconscious;
Sorrow therefore is your own touch—
And a reward of my life.
In the darkness of ignorance
I am blind;
It is the light of your thunder
That burns up the pollutions of my soul.

Again,

Without sorrow no sorrow can be removed;
 The poison should be dealt with a severe burn.
 Let the fire burn as it pleases,
 Thou shouldst not fear.
 It will be turned into ashes
 And would never burn again.
 It is folly to avoid pain,
 Cowardice to escape from it,—
 It is by dying alone
 That death can be conquered.

Again,

Strike and strike me more,
 I can bear still more.
 Strike the strings of my life with your severe touch,
 The music that it awakens has not reached its finality.
 Through the tunes of cruel anguish
 Your figure moves about.
 I do not want your soft and tender kindness alone;
 Do not make my life a failure
 By playing only the soft tunes;
 Let all the whispering anguish of disappointment
 Flame up within me,
 Like the mad winds that blow.
 Awake thou the whole firmament
 And through my sorrow and anguish
 Make me complete

The real triumph of our life lies in the perception of the spirit's power, which transforms the very meaning of the past and transmutes every loss into a gain. This is the way in which we can find even in the worst of tragedy the beauty of an otherwise impossible triumph. This is the real omnipotence of atoning love, unweariedly creating good out of evil; it is no theological or metaphysical doctrine but the real texture of our life and experience. It is the nature of goodness and love that no misery, no catastrophe, no cataclysmic revolution can affect the purity of their being. They are like the petals of a lotus over which rains may pass in torrents, may wither and crumble them but would not leave a drop of water behind. Shakespeare has often been charged in repeating nature over again in his dramas. He is no justifier of God's ways to man, no

philosopher who has a view or moral to teach us, but his artistic creations inspite of his naturalistic attitude creates characters of beauty and goodness like Desdemona and Cordelia, over whom the waves of sorrow may pass and death might stamp its seal but which left untouched the infinite purity of their souls.

On the point of creative activity Tagore seems to waver at times, as to whether there is a super-person endowed with personality and love and creating the world for rousing up man and coming into closer communion with it. There are numerous passages both in verse and in prose, which seem to point to the view that the purposive creation of the great master has but one end and one goal namely his self-revelation to man.

Thus he says,

For meeting me you are coming through the eternal time
 Your sun and your moon can never cover you under their wings.
 In the mornings and evenings
 Through the eternity of time
 I hear the rings of your foot-steps,
 Your messenger has come secretly to my heart
 And delivered his whispering call.
 Oh! eternal traveller through the time and timeless
 Pervading my whole heart
 A flood of delight is heaving up.
 The time has come to-day
 When my work has been finished;
 Oh my lord I smell thee in the winds that touch me.

In many of his poems he expressed his personal adoration to this divine being.

In one profound bow, Oh Lord, in one profound bow
 Let my body lower itself down to the ground.
 Like the cloud of śrāvaṇa
 May my heart lowers itself down
 In the joy of thy communion;
 In one profound bow, Oh my Lord,
 In one profound bow,
 May all my mind lie waiting at thy door.
 May the tunes of music multifold
 Assemble in me
 And make me oblivious of myself—

And in one profound bow, Oh Lord,
 In one profound bow,
 May the music of my little soul
 Attain its completion in your spiritless ocean.

But there are other passages particularly in *Balākā* where the significance of the creative activity has been expressed more or less in the style of Bergson.

In his poem, *Cañcalā*, he gives a picture of the cosmic movement, the movement that creates and passes away.

Unseen and speechless
 Are thy waters
 That flow on, without a pause
 Unlimited and continuous.
 Thy bodiless vacuity shudders violently in vibrations;
 The mere empty flow of the thingless
 By mutual conflict wakes up the foamy substance
 In heapy forms;
 And in streams of colours
 The dazzling light runs from darkness;
 In whirlpool foams the sun, moon and stars—
 In spheres of their own
 Like bubbles evolve
 Thou terrible and oh! thou Detached,
 Purposeless is thy voyage
 And thy movement is thy tune and speechless music.
 Does the distance immeasurable allure you—
 And does its dreadful intoxication
 Make you homeless?
 Make you mad for being a bride
 Of the endless and unattainable?
 From thy oscillating pendent
 The stars are scattered about;
 From the stormy rush of the bunch of your hair dishevelled
 There shines the earrings of lightning.
 The ends of your skirt swings
 In the shaking grass
 And the quivering leaves
 From forest and forest;
 And the flowers fall from the trees on the way

From the basket of your seasons.
But thou only rush and rush on—
Mad and purposeless.
Thou doest not look back.
You leave behind all your possessions
With both your hands on the way.

You doest not pick up, nor accumulate,
Thou hast no sorrow and no fear;
In the joy of thy swiftness
Thou exhaustst thy norm.
Thou art the fullest and in the moment self-same
Thou art empty.
It is therefore,
That you are so holy.
By the touch of your feet
The dust of the world
Forgets its pollutions;
Moment by moment
Death flickers into life
In tremulous flames.

If thou shouldst stand for a moment in fatigue
The startled universe
Would quake with the weight
Of the heaving heaps of mountainous matter—
Darkness, lame and speechless
Heedless and deaf;
The dreadful and flabby obstacle
Would stand across the path
And arrest our movement.
The subtlest atom in its weight
With motionless accumulation
Would strike against the very heart-root of the sky
With the piercing arrow of pollution.
Oh! thou dancing lady,
The nymph of whirling motion,
Thou beautiful form unseen,
Thy dance like the flowing Ganges
Is purifying the life of the universe
In ablutions of death.

And the whole sky shines
 In its fathomless purity of blue.
 Oh poet, this jingling waist-band of the universe
 Has made you intoxicated,
 This unseen and uncovered movement of the feet.
 From vein to vein we hear
 The foot-steps of this eternal motion;
 And your breast in heaves and falls
 Sounds with it.
 No one knows that in your blood to-day
 The weaves of the ocean dance,
 The anxiety of the forest shakes.
 Oh! I remember, from age to age
 She has come sliding and sliding in silence and silence
 from form to form—
 From life to life.

We have translated a large portion of the poem, *Cañcalā*, in order to picture before our eyes what appears to us in many of the writings of the poet a characteristic perspective of the creative activity. In spite of his Bergsonian ring he has an independent outlook. The poet has in many places and in many contexts said that like the traditional God Śiva, the God of death and the God of life, from whose dances the world has come into being, the creative activity from out of which the universe has sprang into being is eternally moving on and on, but it has no attachment to what it creates. It creates to destroy and it destroys to create. It does not stop for a moment to take an account with itself, it moves and creates in the joy of its motion. If it ceases for a moment the world would have been a heap of dumb pollution. Our heart moves in the rhythm and the flow of the blood. If it would stop for a moment, the whole body would be poisoned. The secret of life is the secret of motion. It is by this eternal and unceasing movement that death and life change places and though life ends in death it revives into life again. Our scriptures say that fire is holy. It has no attachment, it consumes everything that is given to it. Detachment or *vairāgya* has according to our scriptures been regarded as the most suitable provision for the traveller who wishes to reach the land of liberation. This *vairāgya* or detachment is not merely a personal virtue, it is a cosmic virtue of the creative activity. She is mad with joy of creation, but she does not create for creation. She creates for realising the motion of her joy. The poet or the philosopher creates by the indomitable urge of his creative activity but he has no attachment to

what he has created. The leaves of his creation fall silently and may be scattered by the winds. He does not mind or does not look back. He gets his prize from moment to moment in the creation that he makes. It would be his egotism and vanity if he would like to cherish his name and accumulate his writings, and write the history of his life so that he as an individual may be preserved, for he, the poet, is nowhere. He is in the moving flow of his creation and that is joy and that is his communion with the cosmic creative movement. In one of his early poems the poet had said that his boat was full of his golden sheafs; there was no room to carry him, the man, along with the sheafs; but here he goes further, he says, he along with his sheafs, the ripe corn of creation, may be scattered to the winds, yet he would move along towards the great sea of light, for he knows not whether it is bottomless darkness or the destiny of his creative activity with which the poet as poet is one; the poet, the man and his works are but momentary trifles; they may rise and fall and wither.

The first poem of *Balakā*, *Savujer Abhiyān*, is a sort of an ode to the spirit of creation. The object of life is to pull away the shrivelling decay and to scatter life in effusion, and to feel the world in the intoxication of budding life.

cirayuvā tui re cirajīvi
jirṇa jarā jhariye diye
prāṇ aphurān chaḍiye dedar divi.

In the poem *Āhvān* the poet perceives within him the call of forward march, to conquer everything, to sound the bugle-horn and burn all bondage, to unfurl the banner of freedom and to destroy all doubt and hesitation, to churn the ocean of death, to attain the nectar of immortality. The poem *Śaṅkha* is tuned in the same tone, and so is the poem *Pāre*. They are all impregnated with the spirit of youth and creation that would not mind any obstacle, but would smother the slumber of ages and dance in a forward march, towards the destiny unknown.

In this work *Balakā* the poet seems to think that our individual life has a destiny beyond death—a destiny not of merging with the cosmic creative activity but a destiny of longer and longer sojourn—its finite aspect, repeating the progression and movement of life, which was revealed in the present one. He feels that the same 'creative activity that is displayed in the cosmic plane should also be displayed in the finite centre qua finite which also being an epitome of the cosmic creative activity and carrying with it, its impregnation would by itself move in its forward

march, leading for itself through unceasing time. Thus in the poem *Shāhjahān* the poet says,

How far I may stretch my eyes, the traveller is nowhere.
His beloved could not bind him,
Nor could his empire;
The ocean and the mountain
Did not obstruct him:
At the call of the night
At the call of the music of the stars—
He runs towards the lion-gate of the new-born.
Life is greater than love;
Life is motion unceasing
And motion eternal.

But all the same, he does not lower the dignity of love. In his reference to his departed beloved the poet says, that his beloved is still living in him. He says,

If the shadow of thy glistening hair
Would vanish from the earth
Then the beautiful *mādhavī* grove
Casting its shadow
Eloquent with the touch of the playing wind
Would have vanished like a dream
Like all that is beautiful on the earth—
Like the very life that swings through the veins
In sweet forgetfulness.
She the beloved
Sitting in the heart of forgetfulness
In swinging in the blood;
She has gone inside the eyes
And cannot therefore be before it.
She is the green in the emerald field,
The blue in the sky.
The poet's universe has found its harmony in her.
No one knows that it is her tunes that sing his songs;
She is the poet behind the poet,
And in all his achievements
In ignorance and darkness
In forgetfulness and memory
It is her that he is realising.

In another poem the poet says,

This I know
That I have to fight with the waves
And carry the boat,
Hang the shrouds
And hold the helm;
This is the command—
This is the destiny.

The destiny that is unknown has woke him up and the call has come from the windy throats of the storm. The song of death has roused him in the evening, for the new wedding and the new life. The deep darkness through all the misery, suffering, jealousy, hatred, cowardice, greed and delusion heaving like mountainous waves, we have to carry our boats regardless of everything. Thus the poet says,

I have seen sorrow every day,
Seen sin, in various guise;
I have fallen from moment to moment
In the eddy of peaceless moments—
In the streaming flow of life:
And over the world
Death is playing the game of hide and seek.
They but jest the life for a moment,
But they pass away.

In your fancy
You may see them standing before you
In their sky-scraping height,

But you have to stand
Fearless before it.
You have to shout with unshaking heart,
I do not fear thee.

I have conquered you every day on earth,
I shall give my life to the firm faith
That I am truer than thee.
Truth is peace,
Truth is good!
Truth is one eternal!

If by entering into the heart of death
 I do not find immortality,
 If by struggling with sorrow
 I do not discover truth,
 And if shame does not die
 But of the shame of its discovery,
 If pride does not break
 In its unbearable garment
 Of glittering shame,
 Then, with what hope of heart
 Shall the forlorn corps
 Run to death by hundreds
 Like the million stars
 In the morning light?
 The streaming blood of the heroes,
 The tears of our mothers—
 Would they lose themselves in the dust?
 Have they no greater value than that?
 Shall not the cosmic cashier
 Pay his debts?
 Shall he not buy our heaven?
 Shall not the ascetic fervour of the night
 Usher forth a glorious day?
 When in the cruel night of sorrow
 By the stroke of death
 Man broke into pieces
 The walls and limits of his mortal sphere—
 Will not the immortal glory of God
 Shed his light on him?

Here we find that the poet believes in finite immortality, though he is not sure of the exact form in which it would make its appearance. From the testimony of our struggle, through all the sins and miseries of the world, through all the accidents and dangers over which we have no control, he believes that he has the surety of an immortal life.

In another poem he says that from the continuous efforts of the struggling mankind for ages, flying forward and forward with ceaseless flutter of their wings, he believes that he has a nest "not here, not here, but elsewhere".

Dhvaniā uṭhiche śūnya nikhiler pākhār e gāne—
 hethā nay hethā nay, anya bothā, anya kon khāne!

But not only human beings but he feels as if the whole world in its forward march is moving towards an unknown destiny; from unknown to the unknown there is a speechless movement and silence only broken by the flutter of the wings.

dekhitechī āmi āji
ei giriāji,
ei van,
caliyāche unmukta ḍānāy,
dvīp hate dvīpāntare,
ajānā haite ajānāy/
nakṣatrer pākhār spandane
camakiche andhakār ālor krandane/

We thus find that in two different moods of life he indulges in two different fancies. In some verses and writings occurring at different times of his life he feels assured of an immortal existence of our finite being and individuality, while in sturdier and probably more rational moments he is satisfied to see the destiny of his finite individuality merging in the ceaseless cosmic activity.

In one of his recent publications the poet describes his vision, when through a very grave illness people had almost despaired of his life. He says that the gross prison walls of old ignorance vanished like mist in a moment. The creation of new life became unveiled in the first gleaming dawn of pure effulgent consciousness. The body of the past accumulation which was staring from the breast of the present towards the future with head uplifted and had created an obstacle of a Vindhya range fell away like a morning cloud by the side of the horizon. He perceived himself as bondless and as crossing the milky way of the distant eternal sky in the transcendent region of light on the banks of the subtlest destruction.

But there is again a particular mood of the poet in which he felt absolutely sceptic about the ultimate destiny. Thus in a letter in verse written to the present writer the poet says,

I do not know what day awaits
Beyond death.
Shall the shadow of this life
With its last glimmering rays
Create a new phantom show—
Of some new colour

In the land of the setting sun!
 What I have known of this life
 Is not little;
 It may have a limiting line
 Still it is limitless.
 It's deep truth in my life
 Knows my self,
 As pervading the whole universe.

In the same poem the poet says that before the eternal question the mind remains absolutely speechless; but sometimes it so happens that we perceive its tender touch and receive that with a lowly forehead as its greatest price. We feel that the strings of our lyre can never express the music of the transcendent. In a momentary flash we seem to perceive the heart of the beautiful but we cannot catch it. The door of this earthly house opens for a moment and the secret room is visible for the twinkling of an eye. The shadow of the transcendent is there; in the heart of the mortality the vessel of the immortal lies covered.

Thus in poetic inspiration he feels the deep relation that exists between the here and the beyond; but as to what exactly the relation is, the oscillating mind of the poet has given different expressions in different moods of his life. It is this undecidedness, in detail, and a decided conviction as a general attitude that marks the humanity of the poet. He is not a professional philosopher, who is professionally bound to give any dogmatic or logical opinion about the mystery of this universe and he is in no need of making any compromise with any particular religion. He feels the pulsation of the world around him in his emotional ecstasy and gives such intellectual interpretation of it as appears to him to be correct for the moment. But of one thing he is certain throughout, the conviction of his life that this world is a part of the immortal through whatsoever mortal phases it might pass.

Immediately after he had his vision at the time of writing the *Prabhāt Saṅgīts*, the poet wrote his *Revenge of Nature (Prakṛtir Pratiśodh)* in which he tried to show that abstract quest after the infinity as in the case of an ascetic leads us nowhere. It was only when the ascetic was captivated by a young lady and the finitude of love expressed through its infinite yearning that he really became happy and realised the purpose of his life. The infinite must descend into the finite, the concrete and through every concrete express its infinite character so that it may attain its real fulfilment. Upto the end the poet has been loyal to this

perspective of life and this forms the keynote of his mental temperament. The poet in his *Reminiscences* says that the beauty of nature is not merely a mirage of our mind but it is an expression of the joy of the infinite itself and it is for this reason that we forget ourselves before this beauty. In the external nature when in the magic or orderliness the infinite is expressing itself, it is possible that we may not be able to perceive the infinite there in the tight fitting of laws and order but where through beauty and joy the heart comes in close contact with the limited and the small we may receive there a touch of the infinite. This intuition is a real apprehension which is greater than all logic. It is through this emotional path that nature drew the ascetic from out of the sphere of the finite to the royal presence of the infinite. The poet himself says that this drama was a sort of preface or introduction to all his future literary efforts.

In the songs of the poet published as a collection of religious songs written at different times, the poet stresses his faith very definitely on a personal God, full of faith and trust. Thus he says—Thou art my pole star; with thee before my eyes I shall never lose my way on the ocean. Sometimes he seemed to be affected by tormenting penitence that he is so hemmed in with obstacles that he cannot take the path of God. He then prays to God that he might strike him with sorrow and flood his eyes with tears, and He might remove everything from his mind and place His seat there. He sometimes felt that the whole nature with sun, moon and stars are adoring His feet; the eternal time and the endless sky were in deep meditation of the infinite greatness of God and were filled with waves of delight; the seasons are offering their flowers of various colours and smell and the birds are singing hymns of joy and the hearts of the saints are blossoming with the ray of God's glory and in the light of wisdom. He felt that the joyous stream of God is flowing through the universe. He protested against jealousy and hatred and prayed to God for showering peace on earth. He felt that the whole world is in love with God and anxiously prayed for lighting the candle of love in his heart. Sometimes however he felt himself pestered with doubts and lost his touch with God and became fearfully penitent. The sorrow of his separation from God is sometimes very deeply expressed and sometimes he felt that the darkness of the world made the light of God shine more brilliantly in his eyes, that the sorrow and misery around him revealed all the more the joyous face of God within him. Sometimes he repented that he could not give his all—his shame and fear, his egotism. He is anxious to give his all to God and he is unhappy that he cannot do so. He sometimes torments himself for his attachments and passions which obstruct his course. He regrets

why the voice of God should not always appear to him and why he had only dreams of God which vanished away. He whipped his soul to rise up and awake with all the world, the sun, moon and the stars. His sympathy went to all the sufferings of the world and he was filled with anguish that he should enjoy pleasure. Sometimes the poet admits that he does not know Him and yet his mind runs upto Him. The universe also does not know God.

These songs are no doubt very charming and devotional, but somehow or other we do not find here the poet in his full self-consciousness and his inner passions were moving more or less in the traditional ways of religious worship, which may be summed up or analysed thus, (1) steady dependence on God, (2) his momentary visions, (3) sorrow at his separation, (4) the world as manifestation of God's joy, (5) the whole universe as worshipping God, (6) consciousness of one's internal obstacles, (7) determination and prayer for evoking God's mercy for being allowed to follow a steady course, (8) disappointment at one's own weakness, which does not allow one to give up one's all for God and also prayer for the power of resigning one's self entirely in the will of God. But sometimes sparks of his sincerity appeared in his wonder that as human being he is extremely solitary, looking forward to God alone.

In *Naivedya*, however, written about the age of forty, the poet's religious attitude was gradually taking an independent shape. The same reverence and love to a personal God and the same resignation appears in a deeper form. There is a feeling that the music of the eternal God is always heard in our lives and it has the power of removing all unholy feelings from our mind. The greatness of God is such that once we realise it there is no scope for our petty egotism. There is the same faith that sorrow makes us conscious of our responsibilities in life. Thus the poet says: "If the gates of my heart remain ever closed, break open the gate Oh Lord! and come into my soul and do not go back. If on any day the strings of my lute do not jingle thy dear name, stand, Oh Lord, in thy kindness and do not go back. If by your call on any day, my sleep is not broken, awake me in thundering pain. If on any day I should in your royal throne install any one else. still Oh eternal Lord of my heart, you should not go back." The poet sometimes is filled with delight as he looks on the world and feels that joy of God has filled the inmost recesses of his heart, but still he is deeply conscious of his failings and prays for the destruction of his egotism. He feels sure sometimes that in our journey towards God there is no death or separation. Death and sorrow show their dreadfulness only when we turn ourselves away from God and look to our smaller selves. He feels very strongly in some of the songs the

necessity of resigning everything to God. His, however, is not an attitude of the retiring ascetic. He wishes to be harnessed with work, for he feels that our call to work is the mission of God and that unless we entangle our hearts with passion we can keep ourselves holy and pure even in the dust and mud of our daily interest.

In many of the songs of this period and the period closely succeeding it, his relation with God is one of distance. He sometimes feels in his heart that his shadow covered him and he is strenuously fighting with his personal failings. But the consciousness of failure is always dominated by a vigorous hope and trust and the feeling of gladness as a direct inner inspiration—an inspiration from nature—sustains the poet. There is a gradual influx of joy, hope and courage which is extremely refreshing. Thus the poet says in one of the songs published in the collection of late Mr. Mohit Chandra Sen in B.S. 1310 (A.D. 1904): "Take me by your call through the open portals into the assembly of the world. Call me from on high in your high voice. The darkness is over in the ocean of light. Awake from selfishness and narrowness, awake, awake from indolence in the beauty of the glory of life. Bring me on the high road, choose me in your work and take off the dark veil from my eyes."

The poet was then more than forty years old and in his inmost heart he must have been sometimes feeling wearied of his poetic vocation and longing to harness himself in public work and it is not improbable that he was feeling in his mind the reflection of the glorious world-wide fame that he was to acquire in future and an urge in his inner soul or God to take him to a higher destiny in the life of the world; but yet we do not anywhere find any sign of pensive disappointment that he was not yet having the glorious fame and recognition from the world at large that he so richly deserved. He had the broadness of heart to take pleasure and pain in a happy spirit as gifts of God. Thus he says: "Whosoever has given me pleasure, has brought me near to God and whosoever has given me pain has done the same. I bow to them all. Whosoever has loved me has lighted his candle, whosoever has come near to me has brought God into my soul and whosoever has left me has drawn me towards God. I bow to them all. I may or I may not know, I may admit or I may not, yet wherever I open my eyes I always find God before me."

He was sometimes anxious to be harnessed with public work but he was far above the self-conceited politicians and the public men, who by the sand-storm that they raise from their clotted hoofs blind themselves with it and are not even conscious of the same. Thus the poet says: "Save me, Oh Lord, from my work. I shake from fear of my own shadow. My selfish thoughts swallow me. I weave my net of falsehood and deception

every day; my egotism arrests the door of my heart. Save me, Oh Lord, from myself, save me, Oh Lord." Yet he was not like a devotee of the older type, who wishes to enjoy God only in his private meditation. He does not wish to realise God only in subjective emotionalism, but he wishes to see self and realise himself in the works of God and nature and above all in humanity. Thus he says: "I shall admit you among all—not merely in my mind and in the corner of my hearts or in my own composition but among all in the earth and the sky shall I accept thee, Oh Lord. By giving up my all I shall accept thee and by taking all that is given to me shall I accept it—not merely in the hymns of adoration or in the sounds of music or in solitary contemplation, but I shall accept thee where the world is awake—in whatever is pleasant and unpleasant. I shall accept thee as I do not know you, and I shall accept thee because I know you. Not merely in the pleasure of life, not merely in my beaming face, not merely in the days of advantage and opportunity, but when misery and sorrow darken like clouds around me I shall humble my head and accept thee with tears in my eyes."

This spirit of perceiving God everywhere gradually deepens as we pass to the songs of *Kheyā* (B.S. 1313, A.D. 1907). But from the time of the publication of *Śāradotsav* in B.S. 1315 (1909) we find gradually a deeper encroachment of the joy of nature as flooding the heart of the poet—nature not merely in its self-sufficient aspect of lovely beauty but nature as revealing God through it. That through all nature there is a shower of God's joy is a creed with which we are very familiar from an early period of the poet's life. But there it had not become so concrete and definite, as we find from the time of the publication of *Śāradotsav*. He finds the mad showers in the dancing clouds and feels within himself a yearning. In a stormy night he feels that through the whole nature his beloved was coming nearer and nearer to him, and the yearning for a distant meeting becomes vivid through his lines. This is entirely a new attitude with which we were not familiar before. Whatever he felt about nature, its blessings and its joys was hitherto expressed in a stereotyped manner, as coming from God and this God is introduced to us more or less in the traditional perspective. But to see God in the yearning that is produced in us by the phenomena in nature, sweet and calm, terrible and devastating, is a view which is at once untraditional and unique. We do not find it in the life history of the great mystics of the past, either of India or of the west. It is here that we may assign the great originality of Rabindranath. To identify God with the inward psychological yearning that is produced as an echo from nature suits very well his theory that we may realise God in the returning waves of our joy when it strikes a

phenomena of nature, and this suits also very well with his theory of art and spirituality. It has been remarked elsewhere that in the artistic consciousness the perspective that nature presents to us shows the supreme personality from behind the thin veil and also demonstrates the affinity of our soul with Him by the yearnings and pangs of separation that are felt within us. Hitherto this pang revealed itself more or less in an abstract manner. To say that everything that comes to us comes from God, that in pleasure and pain we see God, that the joy of God showers through trees and shrubs and herbs is somewhat trite and hackneyed. Howsoever beautifully expressed the idea has no new ring. But it is an entirely different thing when the poet describes vividly his acute yearning and dalliance with diverse phenomena of nature as a real occurrence of real pathos and suffering and a real enjoyment and dalliance—when every part of nature becomes animated with a living soul. But through all this his humanistic attitude, his courage and confidence remains unshaken, as we find in many of the patriotic and other songs which were written about this period. Thus in one of his songs he says—"I do not pray to you that you should save me from danger, but I pray that I may not fear danger. I do not want your consolation but I want to conquer sorrow. If I have no helper in my struggle I do not mind, only I pray that I may not lose my strength in the disappointments and losses that I may meet in this world. My only prayer is that I may not feel beaten. That you should save me, Oh Lord, is not my prayer, give me strength that I may save myself. Do not lighten my burden; be the burden as heavy as it may, give me only strength to bear it." He shows enormous strength and courage in many of his songs to fight and struggle with the world of obstacles all alone: because he knows that the great being which is the fear of all fears is always closely knit with his soul, and he shows indomitable courage to accept pleasure and pain with absolute equanimity and to fight along the way onward. The problem of pain and suffering, depravity and degradation, of evil—moral and physical, is no problem of complexity with him. He has within him the charm and the magic wand of an eternally fighting spirit, under the wheel of which he is confident that all sorrow and evil will be crushed. Sorrow and evil are there only for waking him up, whetting his spirit for rushing his chariot. In pleasure and pain the same deity shows himself and it is only when we magnify our egotism that the shadow of evil can darken around us.

Of all the phenomena of nature, the tropical range with thundering clouds banking up in deep blue darkness, showering in torrents, glittering with shining lightening, with the music of pattering rains, the frogs creaking, the peacocks dancing and the flowering of the *ketakī* and the

kadamva and the mad winds whistling over the heavens, captivate the soul of the poet and fill him with a speechless yearning, a yearning of joy and pain akin to those of love.

The secret of the poet's great confidence and optimism that characterises the poet's nature is discoverable in a beautiful song of his in which he says, that the worship that is not completed is not lost; the flower that falls down before blossoming, the streamlet that is lost in a sandy desert—they are also not lost. What is behind me is not all false, for what is unrealised here is already realised and completed in the Lord.

But with all the ravishing charms of Nature through which the poet realises his deity he is always true and loyal to his older idea that mere emotionalism and subjectivity is not the way of realising God. Thus in one of his songs he says—"it is only there where you are in tune with the whole world that I am in contact with you—it is not in the lonely solitariness of the forest or in the corner of my own mind that I am to find my Lord. But when you are dear to all you are dear to me. Where you extend thy hands to others, it is there that my love also wakes up. Love, cannot remain in secret, it spreads out like light." Yet at the same time he feels an yearning coming in his soul in the depth of darkness. When the world is lying in deep slumbers he cannot sleep and feels an unknown pang for seeking, whom he does not know. He feels that he tries to light the lamp of his soul again and again but fails to do so. In the darkness and disappointment misery and suffering, in tears and sorrow, he invites the Chief Guest to his house. He feels that his deity has taken his life as a drinking cup and through his eyes the divine poet sees the pictures of the universe and remaining silent, in his ears he listens to the songs of his own adoration, and that his creation becomes eloquent in his songs and the joy of them both flows in music divine. His deity in his self-perception is filled with joy and love and this overflows the heart of the poet.

From about 1328 B.S. the oscillation of his mind seems to have come to a pause and we but seldom hear from now of his struggles and failures. Where the stream of the night, falling in the ocean of the day, in that holy dawn where the white and the black, the darkness and the light have melted together in that deep blue, he hears the sombre voice. He looks at the flowers and hears the voice of the light and feels himself free. Behind all the flowers, the herbs and the trees and the different seasons and their characteristic behaviour he feels a divine presence that speaks to him the message of the unknown. But though he was wrapped up in his delight of nature he was never unmindful of the whisperings of his deeper soul. Thus he says, "Who! who is that who dwells deep within

me; by whose touch wakes up my consciousness and emotion, who slides his magic charms upon my eyes and handles the strings of my heart in joy and rhythm of pleasure and sorrow." Again he says: "How wonderful is thy charm that you have made me infinite. You have exhausted me and filled me up again with newer and newer life. Like a little flute you have borne me over hills and dales and have filled it with music by your nectarous touch; my heart has lost its finitude in a flood of joy." His passion for the deity is most keenly felt in many of his songs of this period. Thus he says: "Quenching my thirst, give me, give me, Oh Lord, more and more life, give me, give me Oh Lord, greater and greater place in your house. Pour more and more light on my eyes Oh Lord. Give me more and more pangs and more and more delight of enlightenment. Save me Oh Lord! save me in greater and greater love. Give me more and more that I may sink deeper and deeper in thee."

Again, "I shall sing thy name alone and under the shade, without any hope. I shall call thy name in vain, and without any need, by the mere intoxication of it, like the infant calling his mother merely for the sake of calling, merely for the pleasure of lisping. Again, "You are so rich Oh Lord! yet you wish to take little grains of corns from my hands! The world is laughing at you that to make me a donor you will be a beggar and that from your chariot you will come down on the ground and walk with me in the fields for ages and ages." The faith and trust, manifested in songs like these, is deep and fathomless. In morning and evening through the sky and the earth is manifested within him an experience of a divine presence in love that is inimitable. But all the same the poet also feels that the realisation of the deity is but the other name for the greater and greater realisation of his own self. Thus he says—"This my increasing knowledge of myself will never end and it is in this way alone I know thee". Again like a mad lover the poet feels that the leaves of the forest are whispering and the finger of the grass are pointing out His message—"My Lord is playing in the play-house of my soul. The birds tell me this message." Again, the poet feels that while he had looked at the outside world he had not looked inside his heart where the Lord was lying hidden in all his loves, all his pains and hopes. He was always beside him but he did not approach Him. As joy, He had lost Himself in the poet's play, and the poet had forgotten himself. Lying deep in the secret heart, in all the songs of sorrow and pleasure—He alone had supplied the tune but yet the poet had sung hymn to Him. The tone of resignation is as deep as the pleasure of His touch. Thus the poet says, "I know that I have to give my all, all my possessions and all my works, the sight of my eyes and the hearing of my ears, the service of my hands

and the movement of my limbs—I have to give my all. In the petals of my heart, my mornings and my evenings will bloom towards you in secret. It is your joy that fills my sorrow and my pleasure; through me you make them your own, whatever I received at any time."

Again he says, "Oh thou Beautiful! I receive Thy touch; my body becomes holy and my heart becomes rich; in the light my eyes blossom forth in beauty and in the sky of my heart the breeze blows slow in fragrance. At the passion of thy touch my mind is coloured and the nectar of thy union showers on my life. It is in this way that you make me new and in one life I attain the fruit of the infinity of my lives. Thou beautiful, Oh 'Thou beautiful.'" Sometimes the pangs seem to the poet to be unbearable. "I cannot bear any longer the tunes ringing in the mind and I cannot speak. The creeper of my heart falls down with the burden of the flowers of sorrow and I cannot bear them."

Thus in most of the songs of his *Gītāli* (B. S. 1321) he finds the pangs of separation and the joy of his heart going together.

We thus see that the philosophy that slowly developed and permeated through the various stages of the poet's life is neither a logical rationalism nor a re-statement of any traditional philosophy, but is rather the echo of the spiritual experience through which the poet passed, which, despite outside influences, is in reality a creation of the music of the soul, the inspiration of which came from within and from without. It gradually dawned on him that the divinity which danced in the outside world on the wings of the flying seasons, in the murmuring wings of the winter and the tapering hues and their intoxicating fragrance, in the beaming sky of the morning, the deep infinity of night, the starry heavens in the fathomless universe, the showering rains and thundering clouds, through his personal joys and sorrows, his afflictions and pride, his yearnings and musings, is the same within and without. His own personality was but a reflection of this deity and standing before the world and before his own mind, he discovered the super-person not as a metaphysical substance or a theological God but as a deep reality and person, whom the poet experienced through all his thoughts and writings, whom he always felt as the master-musician who blew his flute through him who enjoyed him as a drinking cup and who realised through him all his experiences as the ruddy wine that overflowed from the master's lips and filled him with joy unspeakable. Based on such an experience the philosophy of Rabindranath becomes concrete and living; becomes the faith of a devotee, the faith of a poet, who has a vision of the unseen.

It would be unwise for us to bring the conviction of the poet in a line with the conviction of other great saints and to pass any comparative judgment on it; for that could only be the subject of a separate endeavour and indeed it would be as rash and as unthinking as to botanize over a flower which has bloomed in the beaming sun. But we can only say that the depths of the poet's feelings regarding his relation with the universe as his deity is at least as rich as any of the passions of the great saint for their Master, that the religious history of the world has made us familiar with. The great difference between the songs of other saints and mystics and that of Rabindranath is that here the emotions lose their concreteness and subjectivity. It is no longer the mystic ecstasy that burns the heart and destroys the individuality, but it is a communion which holds within it the beauty of the external nature and the breadth of humanity. In the intensity of emotion commingled with the streams of love that flow through nature and man the individuality merges in the absolute, yet it asserts itself not merely in resignation and deep enjoyment of the touch of the divine, but in Rabindranath it carries with him the spirit of individuality of the age, the spirit that is prepared to take humanity as its God, but yet assembles within it the depth of meditation of a yogin and the ecstasy of love of a Nam-alwar, a St. Francis, a St. Catherine or a St. Teresa. It is virile yet humble, self-centred yet all-pervading; and its expression does not imply any psycho-pathic debility or the aridness of a metaphysician. It is simple and straight, and a profundity of sincerity is at the root of it all.

VII

RABINDRANATH'S SPIRITUAL BIOGRAPHY

Rabindranath, in speaking of his biography, distinguishes his two selves, his poetic self and his ordinary self. Of these two it is the former that is responsible for the emergence of his poetic life. His ordinary self is concerned with the vicissitudes of life, troubles and turmoils, joy and happiness, honours in abundance and recognition throughout the world ; but his other self is in a sense non-temporal and has no story of its own excepting the evolution of his poetry. As he looks back upon the past career of his poetic self, he feels that over the activities of this self, his lower self had no control. Of course at the time that he wrote the poems he could not always distinguish that it was the poetic self that was working and often had the egotism to think that he himself was the writer of his poems ; but he was confirmed in his view that this is not true. He knew through a review of his writings that the individual poems that he wrote could not explain the complete meaning of his entire poetic creation. Without having a complete meaning, purport of the end before him, he went on composing poem after poem without having the slightest knowledge as to how they together would express the final message of his poetic self. The engineer has the plan of the massive building in his head but the day labourer lays brick upon brick without having an idea as to how these would finally emerge into a beautiful architectural work. At the end of his career Rabindranath realised that the apparent meaning of the individual poems was far transcended and surpassed by the totality of his work ; the whole had a message which could not be spelled or guessed through the message of the individual poems. You the same message had manifested itself in a partial and imperfect manner through each one of the poems. The design of the whole was present in each one of the parts, though but imperfectly expressed. Thus the whole in a way transcended the parts and in a way was contained in them. We have pointed out this fact in the very first Chapter on the Unity of the Genius of Rabindranath.

In an article on his own biography published in *Baṅga-Bhāṣār Lekhak* he says that it is a law of the world that that which is immediately before our view attains an importance of its own ; though it may be a part of a bigger whole, a means to a greater end, yet we forget that at the

moment, and we, are led to think of its supreme importance and forget the fact that it is but a step in the ladder. It seems to attain a fulness by itself and an importance independent of every thing else. When the flower blossoms we are so enraptured with its beauty that we do not think of the fruit of which it is the means. When we look at the fruit we are led to think that it is the final end of the tree and we forget that this is but a means to the future history of the coming generation of trees, that it preserves within itself the seed which at one time under favourable circumstances will lead to the growth of the new fruit. But we find that Nature preserves the completeness and fulness of every phase or appearance though that phase may ultimately be neglected by another phase and to which it was but a means.

In the history of a poet's life the same truth shows itself. When a poet writes something, he feels that he has independence of choice and composition and feels the light that he has succeeded in producing a work of art by his own effort. He has no doubt in his mind that it was he who chose that particular subject and supplied from within him the particulars of the composition and, after all, the poem is his own creation. But in the end he knows that his writings were but a means for the expression of the future, that through them the future history of the poet was being forged and moulded. Inside the poet there is the transcendent muse before whose eyes the entire screen of future development, a finished figure, is present. In comparison to the perspective of such a muse the ordinary self of the poet is quite external; he knows only about the immediate creation but he does not know what greater purpose is before him, what is the form of the finished figure that is evolving itself in and through his writing.

Not only is there the duality between the poet's muse and the poet's person, but this duality is found in the evolution of life itself. There seems to be some unknown agency within us which through our varied acts and contradictions, pleasures and pains troubles and tribulations, our uphill goings and the slow descends preserves an unique unity within us and controls and directs our action in consonance with it. Rabindranath believes that the *Antaryāmin* within us is always working for our good, that though we may be stifling our course and limiting it down to trivialities yet the *Antaryāmin* from within tries always to tear asunder our bondage and connect us with all that is great and infinite. The individual is prompted by immediate desires of pleasure and distinctive impulses, but he is forced to run his journey through hills and dales towards the destined course. So also the Muse within us takes as his materials the experiences

of our lives, our good and bad, the favourable and the unfavourable and in and through them attempts to compose the life history of the Poet. It is that Muse, this *Antaryāmin* that has been called as *Jivana-devatā* by the poet. Not being content merely with this life, the poet enters into a deeper philosophy and says that from the beginning, through various forgotten states this Deity is forging our life into its present expression. Our existence has flown through the universe as the memory of this great history is present in our unconsciousness. It is for this reason that trees and creepers, herbs and flowers, birds and beasts appear to us to be our own. We are united with these in strange ties of love and affection and do not feel that we are in an alien world.

The poet does not wish to enter into any philosophical controversy of Dualism or Monism ; but he feels that the expression of the Deity within us is suffused with special joy. It is that joy, that love that overflows all our limbs and bodies, our minds and our understanding and overflows through the world in which we live and move. All joy is a manifestation of this love—the light that shines before my eyes and pleases me, the coloured beings of light that in the morning and in the evening appear in variegated colours, that I love to grasp the tree and the creeper, that the image of the face of our dear ones is so sweet to us. What is evolving within us is related in joy with this Deity and it gives us an immense satisfaction when we realise the fact that through all our phases of life we experience and express the joyous touch of this Divinity. When we realise that it is through Him that all joy surges up within us and that it is He who absorbs within Himself all that is painful and suffocative, that we realise that nothing in our lives has been fruitless. Rabindranath feels that he can directly experience within himself the expression of a creative force which is in tune with the creative function in the universe. We do not know what end this creative power is working within us, but we are immensely glad to perceive that there is one unity in joy within ourselves and the evolving universe. We realise that we exist and that the whole universe exists in us. Not even an atom, not even a molecule in the world can exist without us. The world is our own and we belong to the world. The colours, songs and fragrance reveal to us a sense of unity between us and the world in which we live. These messages are constantly being exchanged between us and the world. It is this creed of course that manifests itself in the poet as the Deity of his life.

The expression of man in all his glory of love and understanding has been possible because of the contributions that he is continually receiving from Nature around him. The whole Universe with its planetary and

starry systems has been with all its parts trying to nurse him. Nothing is ever forsaken. Without this we could not have existed even for a moment. This has been possible because the same creative Force, the same Being that has been forging out the Universe is also in Man and forging him to his Destiny in consonance with the Universe around him. Even in this life when we can no farther serve this Deity, the light that he has lit up within us, will not be extinguished, because it is fed with His love. Thus the poet says . ●

“Has every thing ended, O Lord!
 All that was mine—
 All beauty, all songs and all life—
 All awakening and all our drowsy slumber?
 If the embracing hands are loosened,
 If my kisses have lost their passion—
 If in the growth of my life
 The light of dalliance is over,—
 Then break up the meeting of to-day,
 Bring in new colours,
 Usher in new beauties,
 Choose me again and again a new—
 Me your old beloved ;
 Tie me in new ties of marriage bonds
 In new strings of love.”

Thus the poet hopes that his inner Deity will even after the end of this life manifest Himself in newer forms and embrace him with new ties of love.

The poet feels very deeply the unity between himself and the world without. As the poet has reviewed his life and looked into the world beside him he had felt the strength of an inseparable unity and his own identity between himself and the Universe. He had felt as if his own spirit had overflowed into the meadow, grass and green hill. The earth then was no longer inanimate and alien. The flow of waters had entered into his spirit and sang its song. Then He says—

“If I become earth or water—
 Grass or flowers and fruits,
 If I roam about the world
 With all the birds and beasts,
 I do not care ;
 Wherever I go
 There is an infinite tie
 That binds my limitless self,”

Again, speaking of the mother earth he says "Mixing me with you, Earth, you have gone round the Infinite sky swinging round and round the Sun endless days and nights, from epoch to epoch. On me has grown your grass, flowers have blossomed and trees have showered leaves and flowers and fragrant pollens."

This ring, this intuitive apperception of the poet, is distinctly pantheistic. He has been inspired here with the feeling of the Upanishads and has felt that nothing is more wonderful than the world beside us—this world of land and water, trees and creepers, birds and animals, the Sun and the Moon. Thus the love of the poet for Nature is not only the natural love that finds its expression in the poets of the world but it had a more solid structure than that. It was inspired by a philosophy and metaphysics which swallowed up the Darwinian theory of Evolution and merged it into the spirit of the Upanishads.

Again the poet says, "Nature with her colour and fragrance has presented herself before man and man has presented himself before man with affection and love and has infatuated him; I do not doubt this infatuation nor do I find any fault with it. It does not bind me and limit me, but it gives me freedom. It takes me from outside myself and conveys me to the world. The rope that draws the boat does not bind it but draws it forward. So all the worldly ties of affection are drawing us forward—some draw us fast and quickly and some draw us but slowly; but by the pull of this world every one has to move forward. This movement is from the limited to the unlimited. Through the affection of all our dear and near ones we are always drawn towards God."

In a Drama called the *Revenge of Nature* the Poet had in his very early life given us the same teaching. He told us there that it is by accepting this world, by trusting it, that we can truly realise the Infinite. You cannot separate yourself from your co-travellers in this world and attain your salvation all by your own effort. It would be as silly as to attempt to jump out of a boat in the sea and get to the shore merely by one's effort at swimming. Later on the Poet has written in his *Mālinī* that he had tried to realise that our goal was not afar but near, that it was not indefinite but definite—that it was not mere imagination but it was directly experienced. Our religion has spread its net in the world of men and the whole world is drawing us. This great tie has filled man up with joy. The poet feels that the total message of his poetic life has found its inspiration and expression in some such expanding love that unites man with the world of Nature. The creative Force of the Universe has found expression in the poet's life through all his utterances and has

pointed to this message. He was driven to its rule to serve its purpose. He could not have resisted it. It was the continuous urge of his inner nature. We are in commerce with the world continually through ourselves. But this knowledge of the world is only partial. This has to be supplemented by importing into us the inspired vision of the poets through whom the world has found a new expression. The Creative Power of the world has expressed the true message of the world through the poet. That which is unspeakable and unthinkable strikes at the door of the poet's heart and finds its expression in the words of the poet. That which is wonderful in the world has been awaiting the speech of the poet to find its true form. That which we perceive in the world appears through poetry in its emotional garb. Our unspeakable emotions and unutterable joys appear appareled in a celestial light in the words of the poet. It is here that we find the true poet. It is here that we should try to discover the life history of the poet and not in the daily occurrences of the world through which the body of the poet has passed from childhood to old age.

It is interesting to note that the poet has used the word *Dharma*, ordinarily translated as religion, in a sense which is indeed quite different from its accepted normal meaning. The word *Dharma* has been used in Sanskrit in quite a variety of senses. But Rabindranath uses the word *Dharma* in the sense of a sort of class vital or creative force. It is this creative force that constitutes our humanity. It is the essential property of man that is called *Dharma*.

Each one of us has within himself a universal of truth and an individual aspect. It is this latter that constitutes the special *Dharma* or the essence of man. It is here that one finds one's special contribution to the Universe. It is therefore difficult to destroy it completely. Externally I may call myself a Hindu, a Mahomedan or a Christian, but this does not show my special characteristic. It is like the turban that covers the head but does not reveal the brain. The turban is a visible mark of identity, but nobody knows what is inside the brain. Our true essence lies hidden within us like the pulpy matter of the brain and the sectarian name of the religion classifies me with many others. But the former is one that belongs to me and to nobody else. The inner essence of an individual holds the man within itself and there is a continual urge within us to express ourselves in accordance with it. But man is not static and whatever he may express at any particular time is but a partial phase of his essence and not the whole.

What does Rabindranath mean by his *Dharma* or internal essence? He has told us that the essence of man, or his *Dharma* as he feels it, consists in

our inner urge in attaining an active harmony with Nature and our fellow beings. This active harmony consists in realising the good—the bigger self of the ideal through troubles and tribulations of life. It does not seek to avoid conflict but it is prepared to pass through conflicts and sufferings of life and in and through them ultimately attain the good. The harmony that is to be attained cannot be realised by avoiding the difficult and the inconvenient. The harmony includes within it this break. One must have courage to face the truth though it may involve troubles and difficulties. In his early age the poet felt a solitary bond of union between himself and Nature and found peace there. But this peace is the peace of the child. The seed has to lie within the womb of the earth in order to protect itself from the conflict of external nature, the storm and the hail, the scorching rays of the sun and the monsoon showers. So the harmony of this stage is attained when man in his infancy finds himself in communion with what is merely peaceful. It is not difficult to realise our own kinship with Nature around us, but it is not enough to realise this unity in a passive manner. This unity has to be realised in the field of humanity. It is here that we want to find the Leader of all our actions, our Father and our Lord. If we cling here to our smaller self, we lead our own self to degradation. We are afraid of death ; when we droop down, when we lose anything, we strike down our future with our present. Pleasure and pains become so important that we cannot transcend them. We then become greedy and do not find any meaning in sacrificing anything.

Our internal essence then must be to seek our greater self within the smaller one and the poet says that this feeling has found expression gradually in his poems. He feels the tune in the poem called *Viśva-Nitya* in the collection *Sonār Tari*.

“Who will sound that note
 Grave and deep
 And sweet in its cadence?
 And the heart will dance
 And become lost in oblivion”.

In the same poem the spiritual nature of the Great Universal has found expression as follows:—

“Who sounds the note day and night
 Sitting in the throne of my heart
 Various tunes through the
 instrument of time
 Audible to some but unheard by others?

I cannot divine its meaning,
The wise and the learned meditate over it ;
The entire human mind
Do rise and fall
Through its controlling action."

This poem reveals the idea that the history of man is being dominated and shaped by a spiritual being who carries it by its urge through difficult and inaccessible paths.

But what is this unity that we seek? This unity the poet calls *Sivam* or the good. And it is through much suffering that we can attain it. He further says that the conflict of the universal consciousness with human consciousness has often formed the theme of his poems. The demand of the universal consciousness and the claims that it has on the human mind is no longer a sweet tune but is a demand for sacrifice, a demand for struggle and conflict in life and not enjoyment in solitary groves. Thus the poet says: —

Oh, how you infatuate
Cruel Lady, thou cruel mistress—
How you are thirsty of blood!
I have given you my days,
You want at last to possess my nights!
Every one in the world
Has somewhere in the earth about him
His limiting line
Where he may rest ;
But your orders come
Transcending all limitations
And tear the heart.
Darkness covers the world—
Every one has his own place to himself ;
From where does come your call even amidst them
And sounds like thunder?

This call is the call of force and power—call in the field of action.
Thus the poet says:—

Yes I shall be victorious
I do not fear ;
Your call shall I endow with success
Oh my glorious mistress!

* * * *

With my last voice
I shall declare fearlessly
Thy voice.

Rabindranath says that here his internal essence or *Dharma* was gradually but slowly expressing itself in the region of his subconsciousness. It has already begun to show signs that it feels the call and does not know the path by which it will proceed. It cannot give any name to that which he perceives, it is yet abstract ; it aims its steps at the door but falters. But yet sometimes the poet felt within himself that some one was speaking within him to control his senses and to strain his ears to listen to the music of the transcendent and to feel more deeply the subtle strings of unity that hold between him and the world outside. He says in a letter, "The religion that you get from scriptures can never become our own. Man's efforts must always be directed to create his own *Dharma* within himself. It can only be attained through great sufferings."

Thus proceeded the life of the poet when gradually he came to a stage where the apperception of the ideal took a more concrete form. Having such an experience he felt that a schism has arisen between the past life and the present. This new enlightenment came to the poet like a storm as depicted in his poem *Vara Se*. There the poet says —

Oh thou inexorable Destiny,
The new, the cruel new—
The naturally terrific,
Just like the fruit that
Destroys and breaks through the old petals of the flowers
Tearing asunder the old red foliage
In a new Form,
So in your fulness
You have appeared before me,
I adore thee.

I adore thee, O dreaded,
O soft and green
Unfatigued and unfeeling,
Thou great hero first born.

Do you know what you have
brought with you?
Your banner is unfurled
Like the fiery rays of the sun
Appearing through the apertures of the clouds ;

With folded hands and uplifted face I stare—
 I do not know to read
 Or to tell what is written there.

Oh thou young with smiling face,
 You pull the strings of the bow—
 With ringing noise
 Made of sharp sounds
 Penetrate through my breast
 And make my heart shiver.

Oh thou young,
 Take up your drum of victory
 And declare thy call,
 We shall stand up and
 Run out and
 Offer our souls.

We shall not look back.

The bonds of the cries of bondage
 Shall not detain us,
 We shall not take note
 Whether the time is auspicious or not,
 We shall not hesitate,
 Cogitate or argue,—
 Oh thou mad traveller.

In a passage, in a paper called *Pāgal* in *Vaṅga-darśan* near about the same time that the poem *Varṣa Śeṣ* appeared, the poet says as follows: "I know that there is a distinction between pleasure and bliss. Pleasure is a daily commodity but bliss transcends daily transience. Pleasure is shy that a speck of dust might attach to the body, but in bliss we may roll in dust and forget our difference with the world. For this reason pleasure avoids dust, but for bliss dust is an adornment. Pleasure is afraid lest anything is lost, but bliss or joy realises itself in giging its own. For this reason for pleasure emptiness is poverty; for bliss poverty is wealth. Pleasure carefully preserves its beauty within the bondage of well-laid arrangement, but bliss expresses its beauty in and through the freedom of destruction. For this reason pleasure is subservient to external law but bliss tears asunder that bond and creates its own law from within. Pleasure greedily waits for the sweet taste but bliss can easily digest the poison of sorrow. For this reason, pleasure is partial towards utility, but for bliss the useful and the useless have the same value."

The poet further says that in this creation there is a mad agency which brings before us all that is unthinkable and all that is unexpected. It is to this mad agency that all phenomena of accidental variation is due. While the Law of Uniformity always tends to preserve the uniformity of the world the mad agent in Nature always tends to break this uniformity and usher in the unexpected. It has not the tune of harmony and it tends always to destroy the course of uniformity. The idea that the Eternal and the Infinite often appears before us in the form of conflict, sorrow, danger and death often find expression in the poet's writings. In the collection called *Kheyā* there is a poem called *Āgamanī*. In this poem the King that comes is the King of lost pace. Every one was sleeping with doors shut in peace. No one had thought that he would come. No one could believe that he would come. But there was stroke after stroke on the door and at last the door gave way."

The poet says:

O open the door—
 Blow the conchshell,
 In the dark deep night
 'The King of Darkness has come.

 The Thunder roars—
 In the floor of the skies
 'The lightning flashes in fire ;
 Draw forth your torn beds
 And pile it in the yard,—
 With the sounding storm
 There suddenly came
 The King of the night of suffering.

Again in the poem *Dān* in the same collection the poet has asked for a garland but has received a sword—

This is not a garland, O—
 This is not a garland ;
 'This is your dreadful sword
 Which flickers in fire
 And is heavy as thunder,
 This is your sword.

Then the poet again says,

From today in the world
 I shall leave off all fear,

So it is possible to make quotations from other passages which show that a ring of disquiet and disturbance has come in; but this ring of disquiet is always of the middle phase; it is not the concluding message. It is through sorrow and suffering alone that one can attain peace and bliss. None can attain them who wishes to avoid the dreadful face of the Lord. Thus the poet says:—

Your tune sounds in the thunder—
 No easy song it is.
 I shall wake up in that tune
 Give me that ear.
 I can no longer be deluded
 With all that is easy and simple,
 Intoxicate me with that life—
 That endless life
 That lies hidden within Death.

In all the dramas written by the poet from *Śāradotsab* 1908 to *Phālguni* 1916 the poet has been harping on the same tune. Thus in *Śāradotsab* the King had gone out in search of a friend. He found that all the boys had been enjoying and feasting on the beauties of the autumn, but there was one Upananda amongst them, who, leaving his play, has been working for his teacher. The King said that his real companion was that boy. It is in him that the joyous unity with the autumnal nature had revealed itself. Through suffering and work he was paying the debt of bliss. The whole universe is burning with the ascetic fervour of sorrow and suffering. We can make the gift of the Infinite truly meaningful with untiring efforts. Every grass-blade is untiringly trying to express itself and in so doing it is realising its inner truth. It is this sorrow and suffering that constitutes our true beauty, it is the feast of our soul. From outside the autumnal nature may all appear as in dance of colourful shadows, but if we look at it with our inner eyes we find that every where there is work and labour. Wherever there is any indolence, wheresoever the expression is baffled, there comes true sorrow. The expression of the self is joyous and blissful. For this reason he who can admit sorrow and death, but through fear or indolence or through doubt does not keep him aside, alone can taste the real bliss. This is the internal message of *Śāradotsab*.

In the drama called *Rājā Sudarśanā* wanted to see her formless King, but being deluded with the infatuation of beauty she gave the garland to the false king. For this mistake and sin there was burning and conflict and disquiet everywhere. Ultimately she arrived at the true unity as

evolving out of the conflict. The true phase of sorrow and suffering is beauty and bliss. The notion that reveals our self to us arises through overcoming the conflict.

In the *Acalāyatan* the same idea is expressed in the conversation between Mahāpañcaka and the Dādā Ṭhākur. Our Lord and Master comes to us in the form of a hostile enemy. It does not seek our submission, but it forces us to it.

In the *Gītāli* there is a song that runs as follows:

In one hand of him
 There is a Sword
 And in the other a necklace,—
 He has broken your door.
 He has not come to beg
 But has come to conquer your heart
 By fighting with you ;
 He has broken open your door.
 He comes in the path of death
 Into our life,
 He comes as a hero ;
 He will not go back with alms
 He will possess all that you have,—
 He has broken open your door.

There is a conflict of the opposites—death and life, force and love, selfishness and the good. The true reconciliations of this opposition can only be realized through the apperception of the internal essence of man. This reconciliation is the great Peace and the great Good. It is by coming in close relation with the Eternal One that one can attain true reconciliation. If we wish to realise the truth of life we can do so only through death. He who through fear wishes to avoid death does not appreciate the value of life and he has not truly attained life. Being in life he is always obsessed with the hallucination of death. He who goes forward and wishes to imprison death in the fold of his arms discovers that what he has captured is not death but life.

In the story of *Phālgunī* we find that the leader who leads us through life ultimately carries us to death. In *Phālgunī* the youths have gone out to feast in the revels of spring. But this feast is not an easy one. It is by overcoming the fatigue of old age and fear of death that we arrive at the joy of new life. The youths went out to capture old age in whose bosom lies death. In the history of man we find this festivity of the

spring. In the spring the new leaves bring the message that they have been ushered in through the pale and falling leaves. If the old leaves had stuck to the branches the world would have been yellow and there would have been no green leaves. It is through death alone that life is revived. It is the message of spring that those who fear death do not know life. It is through the death that the lost life is found again.

Man wishes to make his life true, great and new. It is for this reason that in human civilisation there is constant conflict with death. Man knows:—

It is not a sweet play
Between you and me through life
In the morn and in the even.

* * * *

How many times did the light go out,
The stormy night did thunder,
And in the swing of this passing life
You gave the push of death.
Again and again did the embankment collapse,
Again and again did the mad flood rush in
In dreary days on all sides ;
How the weeping tears had flown
O the dreaded, in pleasure and pain!
You have struck this note in our breast,—
In your love you strike us hard
But never do you neglect us.

The poet says in an essay in 1918 that he does not yet know what the internal essence of man is. It is not a static thing that it can be known. And it cannot be separated from life, and held fast before our eyes so that we could take it in the true perspective. But though we do not know its essential nature yet we do know that it does not lie in idle peace and in the lascivious enjoyment of beauty. The joy from which the world has arisen is not attainable by avoiding sorrow. It is by overcoming sorrow that we can attain it. Thus the poet says—

The light that
Dances through the screen of darkness
That is thy light ;
The good that wakes up
Through struggle and concussion
That is thy good ;

The house that lies in the
 Dust of the road
 That is thy house ;
 When everything is empty—
 The gift invisible
 That is thy gift.
 The life that is borne
 In the cup of death
 That is thy life.
 The earth that lies
 Under the dust of the feet
 That is the land of heaven ;
 Taking all and through all
 You have hidden yourself,
 And that is thou to me.

When the child lies in the mother's womb it does not know its mother. But when from out of the womb it comes to the ground the child sees the mother. When the fondling mother covers us up we become entangled in the twining nerves. We do not know our Lord. It is by striking terror in us that he throws us out of the cover into the dust. That separation brings new consciousness and we see the Lord's face.

In Jewish mythology man was originally in the bliss of heaven. Then came knowledge and this knowledge of the truth produced an internal separation. Then came the conflict between truth and falsehood, good and bad, life and death and man became banished from heaven in sins and sorrow. When we overcome this conflict we arrive at the truth. We have no further fear. From passivity to conflict and opposition and from this to the final annulment of opposition leading to reconciliation—the theses, antitheses and the syntheses—the process, the dynamic, the activity, by which we then pass from stage to stage, from original quietness to conflict and from conflict to a greater peace as a concreter attainment, is called *dharma*.

Rabindranath further says that the main purport of his teaching is the full realisation of the love that unites the individual soul with the super-soul. It starts with dualism and ends in monism. It has separation on one side and union on the other ; bondage on one side and liberation on the other.

In another essay about 1941 the poet in his mature age again returns to discuss his old theme of the creative *elan* of life. He says that the material, physical and biological of which a banyan tree is composed is

more or less identical with the materials of which other trees are made up. But inspite of the apparent sameness of material, there is something in the materials of the banyan tree, which has succeeded in distinguishing the growth of a banyan tree from other trees. This agency is invisible ; it is hidden in the materials. It manifests itself in the specific functions of the banyan tree. It not only has distinguished the banyan from other trees but it has made it possible for it to grow in that individual peculiarity and manner. You can see its movement and work but we cannot visualise its form. Among diverse possible courses it chooses one and follows that in extremely loyal manner.

There must be also something in us that has given to each one of us his individual peculiarity and uniqueness. In the physical world this creative *elan*, has proceeded on its way and has through many civissitudes and obstructions passed on from creation to creation. The materials through which this *elan* vital worked has not always been such that the *elan* could easily come to its desired creation ; its purpose therefore has been obscured from time to time and in a vascillating and shaky line it had to rush forward with corrections and amendations as close as possible to its desired locus line. So in the creation of our life the materials are not such that the *elan* has always been able to play its desired note through it. But the poet says that inspite of occasional mistakes and deflections he had never missed the general meaning of his vital being. The purpose and function of one's own vital being is peculiar to his own and it has its individual value. To miss this and to think of other lines of activity as being superior to ones chosen path is to miss the purport of life. The poet tried to express the idea in his drama *Naṭir Pūjā*. The dancing girl paid as his tribute to Buddha her art of dancing which was the final purpose of her life. She had vindicated the truth of her gift through her last immolation. Dancing was a spiritual act for her as her inner being had made dancing the final fulfilment and truth of her life. The poet felt that his internal *elan* had also been evolving him in a particular direction. He further feels that if he takes his life as a product, as a series of creations, he can discover that there is a unity in and through these creations. And this unity is in consonance with the spirit of his *elan*. It appears as if the plan of his entire life was held in its full perspective by his inner *Antaryāmin* which had made its control of its creations such that in and through all the creations a picture an unified whole—a finished work of art, was before it.

He had the advantage of being born and reared up in a family in which old customs and traditions with their fondness for magical rites and

unmeaning rituals had lost all their grip. The influence of the mediæval age having been relaxed in his family atmosphere, there was nothing antagonistic in his environment to his adopting a course which was largely free from the travails of the old shackles. He used to find the greatest delight in the enjoyment of Nature around him, which had the status of religious adoration with him. This attraction of Nature was for him the principal inspiration of his work. In various contexts, in his inimitable language the poet has described the infatuation of Nature of his early days. It is because he loved Nature so much that he naturally turned to express his joy in and through his poems; for it is love alone that can create. This love of Nature this continual dalliance with it has no part of it in our utilitarian sphere. It is because the poems and works have penetrated through love out of the inner urge for expression that they transcend the limits of uniformity and express an inner meaning and purport that is beyond the words of the composition. The joy that one derives from love has within it the spontaneity of the *elan*. It is for this reason that it can transcend the material aspects of things and fix itself on the immaterial, the spiritual and the unspeakable. Rabindranath admitted the laws of the world and its limitations but in and through them his love for self-expression and the expression of the world discovered for him the limitless Infinite—that which is beyond our law.

It is generally believed that the poet has no attraction for any field of action. But this is not entirely true. He founded his field of action on the creation of his school at Bolepur the idea behind which was inspired by the same urge that led him to write poetry. It was an experiment with him as to how the external nature may contribute to the unfolding of the human mind and to the enlightenment of reason. As he wished to unite with Nature so he also wished to unite with men. In his ordinary field of action action becomes prominent and the internal alliance of heart to heart becomes unimportant. Its purpose becomes mechanical and not creative, and the machine becomes all dominant. When a poet composes a verse the materials are all his own and they are inspired by the urge of the spirit of poetry. But in the mechanical field of action one has to deal with materials that are extremely external and sooner or later the mechanical side of these materials get the upper hand.

In founding the school the poet's main aim was to give a material form to his own inner spiritual conception. It cannot be denied that in all such attempts the expression may largely fail to carry with it and impress upon us its internal intuition. His mind, surcharged as it was with the message of the Upanishads, was always directed to the aspect of

Fulness, to the entirety of the whole. This fulness can only be realised with reference to the spirit and this emphasis of the spirit must necessarily result on the thinning away of the material aspect. We have noted in the previous Chapter how on one occasion the morning light had at once discovered for him his true unison with Nature and Humanity. This enlightenment had indeed been often obscured but still it was the dominant force in him.

It is now time to take a connected review of the various ideas of the poet stated above. The influence of the study of the Upanishads in his early age had indeed a deep and all-pervading influence upon his life, but he certainly drew much inspiration from great Western writers. Thus in an article written about 1912 in the *Vaṅga-Bhāṣār Lekhak* which contains a very important idea that the power that grows the tree and makes it bloom into blossoms is in a sense identical with the power that flowers the mind with thoughts and feelings and finds its expression in literature, is taken from Goethe. (See *Vaṅga Darśan* B.S. 1314). We have it in the Upanishads that the God outside in the fire, water, lands and trees and plants and the God that has pervaded the world is adored possibly as being one with the self (Compare *Śvetāśvatara* 217). Though the same idea is indicated in the *Kena* and elsewhere yet the suggestion that the Upanishads can be interpreted in a somewhat biological manner must have come from Goethe and other western writers. We know also that the poet was familiar with the writings of Caird and through him at least with Hegel whose idea of the motion of the Dialectic finds such a remarkable expression in the poet's idea of the opposition of good and bad, life and death in which alone the final syntheses can be attained. Then the idea of the poet as summed up from an article in *Vaṅga Bhāṣār Lekhak* was on the poet's own confession taken from Caird. The relevant passage has been pointed out by the poet himself, "Though man is essentially self-conscious he always is more than he thinks and aims, and his thinking and knowing is ruled by ideas of which he is at first unaware but which nevertheless affect everything he says or does. Of these ideas we may therefore expect to find some indication even in the earliest stage of his development but we cannot expect that in that stage they will appear, in their proper form or be known for what they really are." Referring to this passage of Caird the poet, in defending himself against the criticism that was levelled against him by the late poet D. L. Roy, says, "The idea about which we were first unconscious motivates us to speak and do as we did all through and even the words and actions of our immature state are unconsciously induced by the power of the idea—it is this idea that I tried to express in my short autobiography in a

rather clumsy manner". He further says that in attempting to express one's life in accordance with the principle of the above idea one cannot be regarded as proud or vain. The statement of Caird is a generalised statement and may be a commonplace, but that is no reason why the discovery of the influence of this idea as realised in the introspection of one's own inner development should not be regarded as a new truth. An inductive generalisation when discovered and recognised anew in a particular observation becomes a new truth by virtue of such discovery. We may now analyse the fundamental points of the poet's theory of the Evolution of his poetic life and in association with it the philosophy that according to himself has slowly found expression in and through his poetry and other works including his school. In the article published in *Vaṅga-Bhāṣār Lekhak* about 1915 which was severely criticised by the late poet Dwijendra Lal as having been promoted by vanity and egotism we have the poet's confession as published in *Vaṅga Darśan* of B.S. 1314 that he got the central idea of the article from Prof. Caird's writings which preached the Hegelian idea that the idea evolves through every man in its own unique manner and unfolds itself through a series of operations each of which is consonant with all the operations of the past such that even when we are not conscious, our thoughts and actions are entirely loyal to those that appear at mature stage and are but a preparation for the same. Throughout our lives and its development there is a unity because all operations of life are developed from the idea that works in each individual man. Being the successive products of the idea as working in each individual all operations of life have an integral unity wherein each appears as a means of a higher synthesis. The notion of this idea has been translated by Rabindranath in Indian concept sometimes as a creative power and sometimes as an *Antaryāmin* or Inner Controller. While Hegel's idea was both intellectual and dynamic Rabindranath's *Antaryāmin* had the perspective of a Super Personality, a Deity. It is in this way that he transfuses the notion of Hegel's idea into the Upanishadic self. In the Upanishads the dynamic aspect is hardly noticeable. We notice there that the reality that expresses itself as the self within us is also the reality that underlies the world of nature. But this unity seems rather to be abstract and static and we do not find that there is any notion of a creative energy which through conflict and concussion expresses itself in the shaky lines of evolution as the external world and finds its final expression in the self of man as we find in the account of Rational Evolution as even physical evolution in Hegel and Darwin. In the Upanishads we hear of the notion of an All-transcending power which is the underlying essence of our life and senses, but which is

beyond our reach. Thus the *Kena* says, "By whose will is the mind moved to action? Goaded by whom does the life act? By whose will do people utter the speech; who is the God that stirs the eye and the ear? It is the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Speech of our speech, the Life of our life, the Eye of our eye, which, all those who are self-controlled reach after departure from this world and become immortal. The eye does not go there, the speech does not go there, neither does mind go there. We do not perceive or know as to how we instruct it; it is different from all that is known and different from all that is unknown. This is what we hear of them from those our elders who have explained it. That which cannot be spoken by speech but by which the speech is uttered, that shouldst thou know as *Brahman* and not that which is adored. That which cannot be cogitated by the mind but that by which the mind is known shouldst thou know as *Brahman* and not that which is adored", and so on. The parable that follows emphasised the idea that all powers of nature are derived from *Brahman*. Thus there was an unknown Yakṣa and Indra, Agni and Vāyu discussed together as to who he might be. Agni approached him and asked "Who art thou?" Yakṣa replied, "Who are you?" Agni said that he was fire and could burn the whole world; the Yakṣa then laid a blade of grass before him and said, "Burn it and show your power". Agni tried with all his force but could do nothing. Vāyu approached and introduced himself as one who would blow away the whole world, but when a blade of grass was offered him he could not move it. The essence of this parable is that all powers of Nature are derived from *Brahman*. Thus taken with parts of *Kena* we find that it is *Brahman* that rules the inner and the outer world. The same idea of course is repeated in many other parts of the Upanishads in general. Rabindranath affiliates the notion of the Hegelian idea with the idea of *Brahman*, *Antaryāmin* or self. Such an affiliation throws open a new line of interpretation not hitherto anticipated in the works of the various commentators of the Upanishads. The higher self, the inner controller, the *Brahman* is not merely the depository of all powers of nature and the source of all our inner activities, sensuous and mental, but the *Brahman* according to this interpretation is regarded as a creative Power, a Person who has before him the finished picture of the entire man as he is destined to develop. As an artist may have before his imagination a complete picture that he wishes to draw or paint and as by each stroke of his brush he gradually contributes to the completion of the picture, so the great super-personal controller, the creative activity, had directed all the poetical creations of the poet such that in and through all his poetical works from the beginning of life to the end one central

message was expressed. According to this view of the poet all his compositions have to be regarded as forming a composite whole, an organic unity, in which each small poem reflects partially in its own way the whole. Rabindranath thinks that even the foundation of his school at Śāntiniketan had this central conception and the idea that lay at its back should be regarded as a part of the same expression. When he wrote the poems individually he was no doubt stirred up by vanity and thought that he had produced each one of them by his own will and effort and that the credit of composing it belonged to him. He did not then realise that each and every poem was the means to the unfolding of the other and that in and through them all one conscious purpose reigned, the purpose of the Deity of his life. He thus wishes completely to separate the individual person Rabindranath from the poet and his creations. The poet's creation expressed in the early poems and expressed all through his life has a unity of its own and had a complete message to be communicated in and through all the poems.

Complimentary to his intuition of this inner deity and its work in unfolding his life the poet says that he has a further intuition of a sort of identity between the world of nature and himself. He had at times breathed out his spirit, as it were, into the world outside and has felt a unity between the external world and himself, and in this way having completely renounced his separate identity he could never feel the vanity or the prompting of an individual personality as distinguished from the world at large. The inanimate world filled him with wonder and exhilaration as he realised its glory and greatness. He gave expression to this feeling of identity in some of his essays and letters, and he holds it to us as being one of the most important messages of his life. Speaking on the line of the Hegelian philosophy we find that there is a phenomenology of nature and a phenomenology of man and the same idea is responsible for the creation of them both. As idea the world of Nature and the world of man is in some sense identical. This mysterious unity of the inner principles of the world and of man has found marked expression also in the writings of the sages of the Upanishads as has been noted above. Realising the essential unity of them both he has enjoyed them both in the same manner. The attitude of the Upanishads, particularly as interpreted by Śaṅkara, has been turned aside in the phenomenal fabrications of the external and the mental world and it lay emphasis on the necessity of conceiving and realising the identity of the inner essence of the central principle—the *Brahman*. This would be the path of disinclination or negation. Since *Brahman* is the only ground-reality underlying nature and man it should be our purpose to turn our face from the aspects of

phenomenal multiplicity and to surcharge ourselves with the wisdom of the sole reality. But here Rabindranath has a new message. In a poem he says:—

“It is not for me to attain freedom through the practice of *Vairāgya*. I wish to attain the taste of the great blissful freedom among innumerable ties. Filling the earthly cup of this world again and again I shall pour down your nectar of various hues and fragrance ceaselessly. The whole world shall like a lamp illuminate me with millions of flames in your light and in your temple. It is not for me to close the gates of the senses and to enter into the posture of Yoga. The taste of your joy should be encircled with other joys of sights, fragrance and songs. Infatuation will burn in me as liberation and my love will fructify as devotion”.

This line of thought is apparently irreconcilable with the Upanishadic idea that the outward reality in nature and man is *Brahman*. But here again the Hegelian idea comes to our rescue. The idea is indeed the truth but all the products of the idea are also ideas and are as true as the idea when taken in close relation with it. The idea is no idea without its dialectic products. Rabindranath thinks also that the world is real and in his *Prakṛtir Pratiśodh* he stressed the idea that in trusting the world and believing what is immediately perceived we are as a matter of fact realising the nature of the Infinite, for the Infinite has expressed himself in finite visible and tangible forms. The course of all living beings is bound together in one tie and it is futile to expect that any one of us may attain our goal by separating ourselves from the lot of the whole. This is so particularly because our internal essence, the *Dharma*, the *Antaryāmin* has expressed himself in diverse forms discharging diverse functions; as mother he gives affection, as son he receives it; as donor he gives and as a beggar he receives; as a disciple he gives devotion and as teacher he blesses. This idea is expressed in the poet's drama *Mālinī*.

He further conceives that the creative action which is also the expressive action is surcharged through and through with love. We do not only create through love but we know also through love and the Deity which finds self-expression and utters the message of the poet in and through his works does so through overflowing joy and love. This brings in the question of sorrow and evil in the world. Rabindranath tries to solve the question by the application of the Hegelian Dialectic—that opposition is the form and mode through which activity releases and realises itself. We cannot attain our best and highest, our bliss and final satisfaction except through conflict with sorrow. It is through conflict with sorrow and death that we can attain joy and life. Any attempt to

seek short-cuts to avoid sorrow is bound to be frustrated. The visitation of sorrow is the special prerogative of those who are destined to attain bliss. The grace of the Lord does not appear in the form of a garland but in the form of a sword. In the clarion call of duty we have to pass through hell-fire only to be victorious with fresher and newer life. From this the poet passes on to the concept of a bigger and a smaller self. He says that the demand and the call of the bigger self on the lower self has found expression in his poems in pretty early times—first—in a mute form as the harmony of the world or as the controller of human history.

The idea of the highest self appears rather to be confused in this context, for the moral or the rational will is seldom felt as the harmonious music of the universe; but this also may be explained away, that the moral law is indeed a harmony, a harmony that displays itself in our conflict in the external world of humanity. But the poet says that in the next stage it reveals itself in the conflict between the universal consciousness and humanity. This is no longer Hegel, nor the Upanishads. For in Hegel there is a larger will as the will of the state which latter may be so-called because it is an expression of the higher will of man. In the Upanishads we hear of the nobler will that looks for bliss and truth and the smaller will that looks for pleasure. But the expression *Virāṭ chitter saṅge mānav citter ghāt-pratighāt*, or the conflict of the greater consciousness with the human consciousness, is something which it is not easy to understand. Consistently this higher will must be the creative force or the inner deity and what he probably means is that the way of the operation of this creative energy is such that as it unfolds itself and tries to mould our lower selves it can only do so by demanding our entire devotion to it and making us ready to undergo troubles and sorrows through which alone the lower self can transform itself in consonance with the higher self and may attain bliss and new life. This is true not only biologically but also in history and in the life of man. The mere quietness and peace of no conflict is in Hegelian terms the mere potency, the immediacy that must dissolve itself into the two poles and pass through the transformation of syntheses. This and this alone is the mode of creation. Rabindranath also accepted this view but he applies it in the case of suffering danger and death and says that no life can attain its fulness that has not boldly faced them and had conquered them by their tenacity and courage. Suffering sorrow and death are to be regarded as gifts of the Deity and we must accept them as such and be reconciled to them. The poet is confident that the result of the conflict will bring us victory and final beatitude. He says that the overcoming of death will ultimately bring new life and illustrate it in the field of nature. The

example that he reiterates is that the trees are shorn of all their leaves in the winter only to reappear again with new foliage. The Upanishadic example is that the crops die in one season and again reappear with freshness in another season—*sasyamiva martyaḥ pacyate sasyamiva jāyate punaḥ* (*Kaṭha*, 6. 6). That nature undergoes decay and death in the vegetable world and reappears with freshness had inspired people from very early times with the idea of regeneration as we find in the case of the civilisation that sprang up in the Euphrates valley. Rabindranath also picked up this obvious aspect of nature and illustrated his theory by it. But after all we can only illustrate the biological immortality where generations of life undergoing death are followed by other generations of new life. Rabindranath does not seem to recommend the theory of rebirth or transmigration as it is understood in Indian Philosophy, at least he never specifically says so. But if that is not so, it is a poor satisfaction for any individual to know that after all his personal sufferings through sorrow or death he will be succeeded by some other person who will enjoy fresh life. It may doubtless be the law, order or method of the creative activity to produce conflict and death and regeneration because of its incapability to accommodate all living beings together or its inability to keep life fresh and vigorous in old age and we can indeed accept this law as inevitable but it affords no satisfaction to the individual mind. It cannot also be said that Rabindranath believed in the *Brāhma* doctrine that after death we shall enjoy higher forms of life in the spiritual world—at least he does not anywhere say so specifically. He seems to enjoy however the optimism that the life that appears here will not after all be absolutely extinguished and that it may somehow retain its individuality and appear in a new form as the sun rises in the morning after the previous setting.

He however emphasises the fact that it is a moral law or spiritual law of creativity that the creative impulse can only recreate through conflict. As there is law and uniformity in the world so is there the breaking of the law, the coming of the accidental and the contingent. The aspect of enjoyment and the grip on things through the attraction of pleasure is associated with the aspect of sacrifice and suffering. The tree wears new leaves but it knows the time when it has to sacrifice them, turn yellow and let them drop. So life can be enjoyed only by those who know how to grip at the joys of life and how to sacrifice them without composition. He who clings at joys like a miser has not the privilege and right to enjoy them. On his own utterance this is the final message of his poetic life and throughout his poems this idea has been expressed slowly and slowly. In the poems of early life this message is only felt as

the rhythm of the law and this rhythm gradually become more and more concrete with the concrete utterance of the message.

In our previous section we have shown that Rabindranath's message, the central idea that inspires his work, consists in the idea that self-knowledge and self-fulfilment can only be through self-expression and also involves with it an appreciation of self-identity in difference which is the *modus operandi* through which love works. That the creative activity within us—mute and abstract—gradually unfolds itself through self-expression as newer intuition and achievements is induced by the great spiritual love that the inner controller has for us. So also when we rush out to the world and are inspired by a feeling of identity with it, this love is only abstract, it is only in the field of humanity, in society and state, in our relation with our fellow beings that we can gradually find a concrete corroboration of the unfolding expansion of the spiritual love. Deeper intuition always involves with it deeper expression; through science and literature, through our efforts at education or works for social uplift, the unfolding of our political aspiration in the state, we have an illustration of the advancing march of love which in its spontaneity expresses itself in diverse ways. In treading such a course we are thwarted at each stage by conflict and suffering and opposition between *meum* and *tuum*. It is the function of love which is in itself the great creative activity which keeps itself alive through opposition and continues its fresher and newer creations. In his later life, as we shall see, the marvels of this creative activity had impressed him very deeply and we can easily trace there the influence of Bergson. It is curious however to note that in Bergson the theory of *elan vital* finally transferred itself into a mysticism of love—"De fait, les conclusions que nous venons de presenter completent naturellement, quoique non pas nécessairement, celles de nos précédents travaux. Une énergic créatrice qui seriat amour, at qui vondrait tirer d'elle-même des êtres dignes d'être aimés, pourrait semer ainsi des mondes dont la matérialité, en tant qu'opposés à la spir tualité divine, experimerait simplement la distinction entre ce qui est créé et ce qui crée, entres le notes juxtapsées de la symphonic et l'émotion indivisible qui les a laissées tomber hors d'elle. Dans chaeun de ces mondes, élan vital et matièation, la vie tenant de la matière qu'elle traverse sa subdivision en êtres distincts, et les puissances qu'elle porte en elle restant confondues ensemble dans la mesure on le permet la spatialité de la matiere qui les manifeste."—*Les Deaux Sources De La Morale Et De La Religion*, p. 275.

THE STORY OF RABINDRANATH'S LIFE.

Family.

Mr. Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee, from whose *Rabindra-jivani* (First Edition) materials have been drawn for the present chapter, traces the history of the Tagore family to the 8th Century A.D. to Vitaraga, one of the five Kanauj Brahmins, who according to tradition was invited to Bengal by Adisur. Vitaraga's grandson Dhira was given village Gud in Burdwan by Adisura's son Bhusena. Raghupati Acharya, seventh in the line of Dhira had become a Dandi ascetic. He had come to live in the village Kanakdand and was nicknamed Kanakdandir Gud. One branch of this Gud family became outcasted through association with the Moslems and came to be called Pirali Brahmin. Jaykrishna Brahmachari, called also Jaikrishna Rai, 4th in descendance from Raghupati, had two sons, Nagara and Dakshina Natha; the latter had 4 sons, Kamadeva, Jaydeva, Ratideva, and Sukdeva. They had received the titles of Rai and Chaudhury and through Moslem contact came to be called Piralis. It is said that Kamadeva and Jaydeva were officers under Taher, a local Mahomedan Chief living in a village called Piralia near Navadwip. The brothers Jaydeva and Kamadeva were forced by Taher to take beef and thus both of them lost their caste but were given a Jaagir, but they made constant attempts to get themselves admitted into the higher caste of Hindu Society. Sukdeva's son-in-law Jagannath Kushari, a good Brahmin, may be regarded as the founder of the Tagore family. The Kusharis were the descendants of Bhattanarayana. But though the Piralis persuaded good Brahmins to enter into marriage relations with them, yet whosoever contracted relations with them came to be called Piralis who had a separate social position from the ordinary good Brahmins. Jagannath Kusari's second son Purushottama is really the founder of the Tagore family. The lines of his other three sons have become extinct. Ramananda, third in descendance from Purushottama, had two sons, Maheshwara and Sukadeva. The Tagore family of Pathuriaghata, Jorasanko and Koilaghata sprang from Maheshwara and the Tagore family of Chorbagan sprang from Sukdeva. The two brothers Maheshwara and Sukdeva had left their own village Barpara in Khulna District and had settled in the village Govindapur, south of the then village of Calcutta. The English had at this time received Sanad for the 3 villages of Govindapur, Sutanati and Calcutta (1686—1690) and by 1698 they had purchased the 3 villages from the Moguls. As the family of Maheshwara and Sukdeva were living at a place which was largely populated only by the lower class Hindus, the fishermen, the Kaivartas and the like, they were always addressed by them with the

honorific title Tagore or Thakur ; and from this time forward the family began to be called the Tagore family. The Tagore family of Maheswara and Sukdeva learnt English and Persian and accepted posts under the British. Gradually through trade and commerce and other means the Tagore family became affluent. About 1769 Nilmoni, third in descendance from Maheswara, built the Pathuriaghata house on a piece of land of about 5 Bighas. Nilamani's brother Darpanarayana had also become rich. Later on Nilmani and Darpanarayana separated. Nilamani gave away the Pathuriaghata house to Darpanarayana for monetary considerations and built the present Jorasanko house (about 1784). Nilmani died in 1791 leaving his sons Ramalochana and Ramamani. Dwarkanath Tagore was born out of the first wife of Ramalochana, Menaka Devi. Ramalochana had adopted Dwarakanath as his son and Devendranath in his *Ātmajīvanī* refers to the wife of Ramalochana, Alaka Devi, as the mother of Dwarakanath or his grand mother. Ramalochana was quite a scholar in English and his wife Alaka Devi was a gifted lady who could manage the affairs of their estate.

Dwarakanath was not only a scholar in Persian but he had also learnt the English language thoroughly well from Mr. Sherborne and Rev. William Adams. Dwarakanath entered into trade early in his life. By this course he soon became rich, but he was also well posted in Law and became the Salt Agent in 1823 and within 6 years of this became a Dewan in the Excise Department. He was also pleading in the Supreme Court as a lawyer. He opened a Bank himself along with some of his friends in 1829. Dwarakanath established a company called the Carr Tagore Co. and established Indigo factories at Silaidaha and other places. He had also taken lease of Raniganj Coal mines and established sugar factories. In addition to these he had also purchased extensive lands in various places. But he had also his share in the opening of the Hindu College, the Medical College, The Landholder's Association, the abolition of Suttee and in securing the freedom of the Press. Though he did not accept Rammohan's religion yet he had much sympathy with the religious activities of Rammohan Roy. He adhered to the Vaiṣṇava faith but the accumulation of wealth had enfeebled his religious activities. He was fond of luxurious living. In 1842 he went to England for the first time and then again in 1844. In England he lived in such a luxurious style that he was called Prince Dwarakanath there. He appreciated beauty in all forms.

DEVENDRANATH TAGORE.

Dwarakanath had married Digambari Devi, daughter of Ramtanu Rai Choudhury of Jessore. She was so staunch in her religious faith that when

Dwarakanath began to take meals with Europeans she had cut off all connections with him. Devendranath, the first son of Dwarakanath, was born in 1817 when Dwarakanath was only 23 years old. Dwarakanath entered into affluent circumstances when Devendranath was only seven years old, and Devendranath was thus brought up under very affluent circumstances. It has already been noted that Dwarakanath and his family were staunch Vaiṣṇavas and therefore strict vegetarians; but when Dwarakanath became one of the richest magnates of Calcutta, wealth and opulence had produced an undesirable change in the mentality of Devendranath. But at the age of 18 his grandmother Alaka Devi died and this gave a rude shock to his mind and inspired ascetic tendencies in him. At this time he turned to the study of the European philosophers of the 18th century and became anxious to realise the nature of God. He also tried to learn Sanskrit and was also studying the Mahabharata. Iconoclastic tendencies prevailed in him and he took a vow that he would not bow his head before idols. He was from this time gradually drawn towards Rammohan's faith. At this time a torn leaf of the *Īsopaniṣad* published by Rammohan Rai came into his hands. This directed his attention to the Upaniṣads and he began to study them with Ram Chandra Vidyabhushan. In 1839 he established the Tattvaraṅjanī Sabhā which later on was called Tattvavodhinī Sabhā. About the year 1840 he came in contact with Akshoy Kumar Dutt and established a school associated with the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā where free teaching was imparted to boys. In 1840 he published a translation of *Kaṭhopaniṣad* and in this year his first son Dwijendranath was born. In 1842 at the age of 25 Tattvavodhinī Sabhā under him accepted the Brahmo creed. It was at this time that his second son Satyendranath was born. In the year 1843 he started the Tattvavodhinī Patrikā with Akshoy Kumar Dutt as the first Editor. At this time Devendranath also introduced the chanting of the Upaniṣads in public. This was an innovation on Rammohan Rai who did not allow the Upaniṣads in public. On the 23rd of December, 1843, he openly accepted the Brahmo Dharma (B.S. 1250, 7th Pauṣa). Both Devendranath and his son Rabindranath observed this date all through their lives with great reverence. After two years Devendranath observed the anniversary of accepting the Brahmo creed and this was the first public observance of the Brahmo Samaj. His third son Hemendranath was born in 1844. From this time forward Devendranath turned to religious controversies and discussions with the Pandits, Christian Missionaries and scholars of the Hindu college. He had become absolutely atheistic. He became thus unmindful of his duties in the management of the Estate and Dwarakanath was at this time in England. At this time, in 1846, his father died in

England. After his father's death, with great self-sacrifice he managed slowly to pay down the debts to his creditors which he could have avoided if he had a less conscientious mind.

It may be noted in this connection that when Rammohan Rai had gone to England the expenses of the Brahmo Samaj were paid by Dwarakanath. The legacy of it then descended to the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā, and the name of the creed at that time was called *Vedānta Pratipādyā Dharma* or the Faith of the Vedānta. In 1847 in a meeting of the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā the name was changed to Brāhmo Dharma. Devendranath was then only 30 years old and his daughter Saudamini Devi was born at this time. The Brahmo movement at this time secured two great patrons in the Maharaja Mahatab Chand of Burdwan and Maharaja Srish Chandra of Krishnanagar, and a Brahmo Samaj was established in the city of Krishnanagar. At this time Devendranath fell in bad times. The Union Bank of the Carr. Tagore & Co. collapsed and Devendranath had to become very economical in the maintenance of his family and devoted himself to studies and the translation of the Rigveda was started by the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā and continued for 25 years. This was the first complete translation of the Rigveda in Bengali. In 1848 his son Jyotirindranath was born. In the mean while a great change had come in the religious convictions of Devendranath. The sturdy arguments of Akshoy Kumar had proved to him that a belief in the infallibility of the Vedas and the chanting of the Vedas was contrary to the ideals of the Brahmo Dharma. He therefore edited a special book called the *Brāhmo Dharma* and parts of this book were read instead of the Upaniṣads. In 1853 he became the Editor of the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā Journal but he had not yet then started giving sermons from the pulpit. In 1856 he went to Benares by boat and returned to Calcutta in 1858. It was at this time that he met Keshav Chandra Sen who was then only 21 years old. Keshav Chandra from this time became his chief associate. In 1858 he went with Keshav Chandra and Satyendranath to Ceylon. In 1860 he gave his first sermon from the Pulpit. In 1861 Rabindranath was born and his daughter Sukumari was married. Both the functions were done according to the Brahmo rites as drawn up by him. Later on Keshav Chandra's views became more revolutionary and he seceded from Devendranath in 1866 and he established the Indian Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta. In 1868 the temple of the Brahmo Samaj was established. At this time Devendranath's Brahmo Samaj was styled the Adi Brahmo Samaj. The last 40 years of his life was spent by Devendranath mostly in travels and meditation at Santiniketan. He had purchased a large piece of land in 1863 at Bolepur which later on became famous as the Santiniketan.

THE SOCIAL AND LITERARY ENVIRONMENT OF RABINDRANATH.

Rabindranath was born in 1861 four years after the Sepoy Mutiny. This was a time of great changes in political, economical, religious and literary atmosphere of Bengal. The Railways were being established, the Suez Canal was opened and these two gave facilities for internal and external communication. Devendranath was preaching Brahmo Dharma. Vidyasagar was busy in stimulating Female Education and introducing Widow marriage, the Hindu Patriot was busy fighting the indigo planters. In Bengali literature Ishwar Gupta was succeeded by Madhusudan. The Indian stage was established. The conservatives were fighting against the Brahmos and the renegade Hindus and the Calcutta University was established. All these movements had their repercussions on the growth of Bengali literature. Until after Ishwar Chandra Gupta we cannot trace much of European influence in Bengali literature. When Vidyasagar and Akshoy Kumar were introducing Sanskritic style in Bengali, *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* and *Hutum Pyāncār Nakṣā* wanted to introduce a new style. Madhusudan wavered back to the Sanskritic style and impregnated it with new life and Dinabandhu Mitra tried to initiate the colloquial style in Drama. At this juncture Bankim Chandra appeared with a new style of his own. We then have Biharilal who had particularly inspired Rabindranath. The Brahmo Samaj had taken up the cause of womens' emancipation and in 1856 women were first allowed to join the public prayer meetings of the Brahmo Samaj. The purdah system had been very stringent in the Tagore family. Satyendranath Tagore, son of Devendranath and the first I.C.S. of Bengal revolted against this practice and introduced a costume for women for going out in public. Many of our modern conveniences of city life such as the introduction of pipe water in private houses had not yet come.

The Tagore family was particularly given not only to the general enlightenment of the new thought, but also to literary and musical culture. The spirit of nationalism was also peeping in various forms such as literature, songs, painting, dress, etc. in the Tagore family. Jyotirindranath, Rabindranath's brother and Gunendranath's cousin had fitted up a stage for the performance of good plays and it was here that Madhusudan's *Kṛiṣṇa Kumārī* and *Ekei Ki Bale Sabhyatā* were staged. There was a committee of 5 who arranged these dramatic shows. And it was at this stage of Jorasanko that Ram Narayan Tarkaratna's

Navanāṭaka was played which was witnessed by Lord and Lady Lansdowne. Dwijendranath was then a very young man and Rabindranath was aged only 6. Dwijendranath was at this time composing the *Svapna-prayāṇa*. The whole house was always ringing with recitations, dramatic actings and the like. In addition to this on account of the songs of the Brahmo Samaj musical experts were employed. Gaganendranath, Dwijendranath and Satyendranath all composed songs and Jyotirindranath became a musical expert early in life. Jyotirindranath used to discover new tunes and made new compositions of music. Rabindranath had the advantage of listening to and practising music from childhood. It must be remembered that Rabindranath had an exceptionally good voice. He also had a good training in music from expert teachers and from Jyotirindranath Tagore, his brother. On the other hand the chanting of the Upaniṣads had won for him the magic land of Vedic tunes, the Rishis and the hermitages which remained with him as the dominant influence all through his life. English literature and even European philosophical thought had taken its due place among the elder members of his family. It may also be remembered that his father had taken to the study of Sanskrit and thus there was a renaissance of Sanskrit studies in the Tagore family. We have already referred to in the previous chapters the influence of Upaniṣadic studies upon Rabindranath's life. Not only in most of his writings do we find an influence of the Upaniṣads, but we find that it was the ideal of a hermitage that he wished to give form to in the school that he established at Santiniketan. His intuitive apperception in consonance with the Upaniṣadic teachings that man and the world have both emerged from and are being continually created and sustained by the spiritual activity of one being, was the kernel of his philosophy. But at the same time he protested against the Śaṅkarite interpretation of the Upaniṣads that all the creation was *māyā* and mirage and Brahma alone is true. He regarded all that was produced by the spiritual activity of the Brahman as being as real as Brahman and he thought that at the root of this spiritual activity there was the principle of love. It was through love that man realised himself through man and nature. Training in love is the true training of man. Love is devoid of all ideas of utility and usefulness, or the fulfilment of biological and physical needs. It was a surplus of spontaneity that manifested itself in art and literature, religion and education, and even social and political advancement. Here probably the traditional faith of the family in Vaiṣṇavism had unconsciously worked within him. It may not be out of place here to mention that he was very deeply read in Jayadeva and the Vaiṣṇava writers in Bengali.

Rabindranath in his *Jīvan-smṛti* or 'Memoirs of Life' has drawn for

us some pictures of his early life which however is not the story of his life. But they secure for us the proper environment in the perspective of which we can fairly correctly understand the situation of Rabindranath's mind in his early days.

At first he was very anxious to go to school and was admitted to the Oriental Seminary of Gour Mohan Auddy, at the age of 5 or 6, but the severe discipline of mismanaged forms of education then prevailing in the schools of Bengal had no appeal for him. It would be wrong to assume that it was any fondness for luxurious form of living that prompted him to leave the school. For in his childhood his ways of living were very simple and his time was mostly spent among the servants. His elders were busy with their own affairs and his mother was ill and his sisters were busy with their own children and thus Rabindranath was left to the care of the servants of the house; but his love of nature expressed itself even under the most unpoetical surroundings of the Jorasanko house. The pond, the banyan tree and the cocoanut groves on its bank appeared to him as he looked upon them from his window as a picture of colours which he drank deep with his eyes and reminiscences of which appeared even in the poetry of his old age.

Seclusive by nature, he seldom mixed with his companions. From the Oriental Seminary he was transferred to the Normal School at the age of seven or eight and he was very unfavourably impressed there with the behaviour of both the students and teachers and already at this early age his tendency of writing poetry had become known to people. A picture of his first visit outside Calcutta to Paniti at this early age has been preserved in his poem *Punarmilan*. The arrangement of teaching at his house under his brother Hemendranath's supervision was more than he could swallow in the Normal School. He had to rise very early in the morning and had to take a training in wrestling with wrestlers and then from 6 A.M. to 9-30 A.M. he had to study Physics, *Meghanāda-badha*, Geometry, History and Geography. Then after school he had to do drawing and gymnastics. In addition to this he had to study a little anatomy and music. He left the Normal School and was admitted in a school called the Bengal Academy.

It may be noted in this connection that from some years prior to Rabindranath's birth his father had taken to the habit of staying in solitary places and hills for meditation and Rabindranath could get but little contact of his father. In 1873 Devendranath came down from the hills to have the holy thread ceremony of Rabindranath done according to the new rites introduced by him. After the completion of the holy thread ceremony Devendranath again started for the hills taking Rabindra-

nath with him. On the way he first visited Bolepur and from there went to Sahebgunj, Danapur, to Allahabad, Cawnpore and Amritsar and from there he went to Dalhousie. Rabindranath wrote a poem called the 'Defeat of Prithviraj' which however is now lost. Devendranath used to rise in the morning hours of the night and Rabindranath had to get by heart *Vyākaraṇa Kaumudī* of Vidyasagar while his father remained engaged in meditation. Then the father and the son went out for a morning walk and on their return Devendranath taught him relevant portions from Pater Parley's works. He had to study Astronomy from Proctor's *Astronomical Treatise* and had demonstration of the starry heavens in the night from his father and had to translate portions of Pater Parley's writings into Bengali prose. This was his first attempt in Bengali prose. After a year he returned home and was again admitted to the Bengal Academy. After a time he left the Bengal Academy and in the beginning of 1875 was admitted to the St. Xavier's College. His mother died at this time when he was aged 13 years and 10 months.

FIRST LITERARY ATTEMPTS.

When Rabindranath was aged eleven Bankim Chandra and Hemchandra had already begun their work. *Vaṅga Darśan* of Bankim Chandra appeared in 1872 and had captured the mind of the Bengali public. At first Rabindranath's studies were rather limited. He used to read the Journal called *Vividhārtha Saṁgraha* edited by Rajendra Lal Mitra and another journal called *Abodha-Bandhu*. It was in this journal that he first read a translation of *Paul and Virginia* by Krishna Kumar Bhattacharyya and *Indrer Sudhā Pān, Nisarga Sandarśan Kāvya, Vaṅga Sundarī* and *Surabālā* by Bihari Lal Chakravarty. He had already read *Jāmāi Bārik* by Dinabandhu Mitra, and he was already reading by 1873 *Prācīn Kāvya Saṁgraha* edited by Radha Charan Mitra and Akshoy Chandra Sarkar. He was writing poems from this time and his mind at this time was filled with rapturously wild fancies. A stanza from his *Phula Bālā* contained in the *Saisava Saṅgīt* written about the age of 13 may illustrate our point.

"Wearing flower costume hand in hand the flower girl dances round. Her dishevelled hairs are flying in play and the flower dust showers on the girl . . . Some flower-girl wearing a flower garland listens attentively to the flower boys' whispers. Delighted in heart, bashful in shame she was counting the petals with downcast eyes"

The *Saisava Saṅgīt* contains many descriptions of trees and forests and fruits and flowers and the play of flowers in the gardens—the flowers were in love with one another. A stanza may be quoted to illustrate how flowers were personified and human feelings were attributed to them.

“The rose is blossoming there. O Bee! thou shouldst not go there to drink the cup of honey. You might pierce your wings with thorns. There is Bela here and Champak there and Shephali blossoming there. You might tell the pangs of your heart to them”.

The Bee says—“Here is the Bela, there is the lotus no doubt.” But says the Bee “I shall not tell them all that I had not said to any one. But I shall tell to those alone what is hidden in my heart. If in trying to do that I may burn with thorny pricks.”

The influence of Dwijendranath's *Svapna Prayāṇ* is evident in many of the poems of *Saisava Saṅgīt* or Songs of Infancy. His private tutor Jñān Chandra Bhattacharyya adopted novel methods of teaching him. He explained to him in Bengali portions of Macbeth and *Kumāra-Sambhava* and would not let him go out of the room until he versified the purport. He was reading *Sakuntalā* with Ramsarvasva Pundit. At this time Broja Babu took the place of Jñān Babu as house tutor and he used to make him translate into verse Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, but he was gradually becoming unmindful of his school studies and people at home and at school had given up all hopes of his future career. Only his brother Jyotirindranath and his wife had taken kindly to him. It was at this time (1874) that Viharilal's *Sāradā Maṅgal* was published in the *Ārya Darśan Journal*.

It would not be out of place here to refer to one important fact about the development of the mental attitude of the Bengal's people with reference to nationalism and its bearing in the shaping of Rabindranath's mind in early life. The influence of English education and the consequent change in the attitude of the mind of the people have often been stressed in various contexts by various writers. But it ought to be noted that practically within 100 years of the battle of Plassey the spirit of Indian Nationalism had begun to raise its head in various cultured quarters and the Tagore family was one of those centres where these feelings were specially nurtured. From the time of the publication of the *Tattva-bodhini* journal Akshoy Kumar Dutt had started preaching patriotism. About the year 1867 a Hindu Mela was started under the secretaryship of Gunendranath Tagore with the purpose of National glorification. When this Mela was established Rabindranath was only

6 or 7 years old. About 8 years after the foundation of the Hindu Mela Rabindranath had written his first national poem which was published in the then bi-lingual *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. Again 2 years after this, when a great famine was ravaging throughout India, Lord Lytton started his Durbar in Delhi. Rabindranath had at this time read a poem demonstrating the unworthiness of those who went to attend the function at the time of this great famine. It may be remembered that *Palāśir Yuddha* by Nabin Chandra Sen was published in 1875, i.e., one year before Rabindranath's poem was read. Dealing the purpose of the Mela Gunendranath Tagore had said as follows: "This is a great want of the Indian people that in all their actions they seek the help of the Government Officials. This is indeed shameful. So we ought to make the firm resolution in this Mela that we may establish the spirit of self-dependence in India." We shall deal with Rabindranath's idea of patriotism in due place but we may remark in advance that the central idea of Rabindranath's politics was derived from the above idea of Gunendranath Tagore. All his writings on political subjects seem to be an elaboration of this idea. We may remember that Rangalal's patriotic songs as well as those of Hem Chandra were written about this time. Rabindranath had imbibed the spirit of nationalism from his brother Jyotirindranath in whose company Rabindranath spent his childhood and whom he has always remembered gratefully in his later years.

Most of Rabindranath's writings before the age of 13 has practically disappeared together with the blue Khata and the Letter Diary. Of all his writings between 13 to 20 only *Bhānu Simha Tḥākurer Padāvalī* and *Vālmiki Pratibhā* have survived, but both of them have suffered stringent revision and correction by the poet himself. If we leave these two works we may regard *Sandhyā Saṅgīt* as the first of his published works of the early period. Between 13 to 20 he had written *Banaphul* (1880), *Kavi Kāhinī* (1878), *Vālmiki Pratibhā* (1881), *Bhagna Hṛday* (1881), *Rudra-caṇḍa* (1881) (the first drama), *Kālamṛgayā*, *Saiśav-Saṅgīt*, *Iuroṇ Pravāśir Patra* (1881) and *Sandhyā Saṅgīt* (1882).

One Krishnadas had started a journal in 1873 called *Jñānāṅkur*. *Svarṇalatā* of Tarak Ganguly was serially published in this book. The early effusions of Rabindranath were published in this journal and he also published his *Banaphul*, *Pralāp* and a criticism in this journal when he was about 13 or 14. *Banaphul* contained 8 cantos. The story relates how Kamala, a young girl upto the age of 16 was brought up in forest wilderness by his father and how she had learnt to love all natural things—the plants and the beasts of the forest. Her father died and a stranger lad Vijoy came there, married her and took her away to society. Coming to

Society, Kamala happened to fall in love with Nirode, a friend of Vijoy and Kamala's companion Niroja fell in love with Vijoy. Nirode refused the unsocial love of Niroja though she would not understand how her love for Nirode could be regarded as reprehensible. Later on Vijoy became jealous of Nirode and killed him. At this Kamala returned back to her old wilderness and found that the birds and beasts and the trees and creepers of the forest had all forgotten her. The point to be noted in this work is its intense lyric character and an all-absorbing love for nature. It also dreams of the possibility of training a human child purely through natural influences. The ultimate tragedy consists in the fact that Kamala after her social life found herself entirely forgotten by her old friends, the inmates of the jungle. Their passion for Nature, the most dominant characteristic of Rabindranath's poetry, was present in its all-absorbing character from his childhood. In 1877 Rabindranath, then 16 years old, together with Jyotirindranath Tagore and Akshoy Choudhury (a well-known poet of the age) had started a literary circle and together with it a monthly journal *Bhāratī*. The publication of the *Bhāratī* brought Rabindranath the poet in closer contact with the poet Viharilal Chakravarty. In this journal Rabindranath published a criticism of *Meghanād-Padma* which was fairly recondite for his age, in the year 1877. From this time forward he published most of his writings in this journal. Rabindranath himself in his later years felt ashamed to refer to all his prose writings of the time not only for their immaturity but for the absence of any literary self-control. He had started also a novel called *Karuṇā* in the pages of the *Bhāratī* which however was never published in the form of a book. His *Bhānu Siṃha Tāhākurer Padāvalī* was published also at this time and later on his *Kavi Kāhinī* in the pages of the *Bhāratī*. He had made a study of the *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī* as published by Sarada Charan Mitra and Akshoy Chandra Sarkar (1872-73) and it is these poems that inspired his *Bhānu Siṃha Tāhākurer Padāvalī*. *Bhānu Siṃha Tāhākurer Padāvalī* was published under the pseudonym of *Bhānu Siṃha* in imitation of Chatterton's assumption of the pseudonym of T. Rowley a supposed old writer, and associating it with his work *Ryse Pymeteyning*. Rabindranath says in his Memoirs of early life that Dr. Nishi Kanta Chatterjee in his theses for Doctorate in Germany had tried to prove the antiquity of this *Bhānu Siṃha*. In his *Kavi Kāhinī* published at the same time he displayed the sentiment, the all-absorbing passion that the poet has for Nature and how even this all-absorbing passion for Nature cannot satisfy him until he is able to exchange his love with man. He falls in love with a girl Nalini. Even her love cannot satisfy him and he goes out again into the wild world seeking satisfaction.

Being unsuccessful there he returns to the girl who died at his desertion. The poem ends in a dream of a classless society in which no man is hostile to his fellow being, but is bound together in one aspiration and in one love. The ideal of Universal love finds its expression though in a little wild form as a uniperamental manifestation and not as the inspiration of a properly understood philosophy.

At the age of 17 when his brother Satyendranath was District Judge in Ahmedabad Rabindranath went to live with him and studied Sanskrit poetry all by himself and became inspired with the sonorous cadence of Sanskrit metre. He was also writing all the time in the *Bhāratī*. As he was preparing himself for going to England he wrote a number of articles on various subjects such as etiquette of the English people (*İngrej Diger Adav Kāyda*), 'The Saxon Race and the Anglo Saxon Literature' (*Saxon Jāti O Anglo-Saxon Sāhitya*), 'The Norman Race and the Anglo-Norman Literature' and in addition to this he wrote also on the love of Beatrice and Dante, Petriarch and Laura and the love episodes of Goethe.

At this time he also began compositions in giving over tunes to songs. His *Pratīśodh*, *Līlā* and *Apsaraṇprem* appeared in *Bhāratī* in B.S. 1285. His *Vālmīki Pratibhā* appeared in 1881 and *Bhagna Hṛday* also in the same year. Practically all his writings from 13 to 18 such as *Banaphul*, *Karma*, *Kavi Kāhinī*, *Rudracanḍa* and *Bhagna Hṛday* were tragedies and even *Sandhyā Saṅgīt* had a pensive ring in it. Of the songs that were incorporated in his *Śaīśava Saṅgīt* only a few have found place in his later collection of works. He also wrote some stories in verse at this time such as *Pratīśodh*, *Līlā*, etc., already mentioned. In *Pratīśodh* he describes how a son was inspired by the murder of his father to take revenge. He took refuge in a cottage and fell in love with a girl there. On the day of the marriage he saw the shadow of his father and it was found that the father of the girl he was going to marry was the murderer of his father. The man repented his murder and he did not think it necessary any further to take revenge but at this time he again heard the voice of revenge and killed the father of the girl and the girl died in grief. In *Līlā* a man Ramadhir loves a girl *Līlā* but a man called Vijoy secretly loved Leela and took a vow to stop the marriage. Vijoy's love for Leela became changed with a spirit of revenge and he afterwards stole Leela and put her in a dungeon and falsely told her that he had killed Ramadhir; on hearing this the girl committed suicide, and Vijoy also died. *Rudracanḍa* is a drama in which Rudracanḍa the King of Hastinapur had lost kingdom at the hands of his rival Prithviraj he was living in a forest, so that he may in future take revenge. His daughter however fell in love with Chandkavi a courtier of Prithviraj. In the meanwhile Mahmud

Ghuri defeated Prithviraj and Rudracanḍa being unable to take revenge on Prithviraj himself felt no further attraction with his life and struck himself with a dagger. His daughter Amiya after searching for Chandkavi in vain returned to her father who was in his dying moment. Later on Chandkavi came in search of Amiya when she was at the point of death.

After staying for six months at Ahmedabad and preparing himself for his sojourn to England Rabindranath started for England in 1878 at the age of 17 with Satyendranath Tagore whose family was already residing there. Rabindranath stayed at Brighton and was admitted in a public school there. At this time Mr. Lokendra Nath Palit, son of Taraknath Palit was staying in London. He persuaded Satyendranath to allow Rabindranath to leave the family atmosphere in Brighton and to get admitted in the London University where Rabindranath had the opportunity of studying English with Henry Morley, the brother of John Morley, the politician. He also studied Latin with a teacher. He stayed for some time in lodging houses and then with Dr. Scott. The idea of women's emancipation and the custom of men and women eating together enjoying together had a great appeal to him and he used to publish letters to that effect in *Bhāratī* and these were controverted by his eldest brother Dwijendranath in the same paper. This controversy went on for some time when Maharshi sent his mandate for shipping Rabindranath back to India and Rabindranath was glad to come back to India. While in England he wrote a poem called *Bhagnatari* which was succeeded by another called *Bhagna-hṛday*. In *Bhagnatari* two lovers Ajit and Lalita had their boat upturned in a storm. The girl Lalita was found and nursed by a young man Suresh who fell in love with her. One day as the two were roaming there arose a storm and they sought refuge in a broken house where Lalita was accosted by a half-lunatic ascetic and she fell into a swoon. In the *Bhagna-hṛday* a poet is the hero. He was loved by a girl called Murala who could not express her love openly to him. The poet in his turn fell in love with a frivolous girl Nalini, when at last he understood his error and discovered that the person who really loved him was actually always with him. Murala was already dying. The poem *Bhagna-hṛday* was published only once and the poet did not think much of it in his later life. But Maharaja Vir Chandra Manik of Tripura who was himself writing poems after the death of his first wife was captivated by the *Bhagna-hṛday* which seemed to be an echo of his own thoughts and he sent his Private Secretary to Calcutta to congratulate Rabindranath. This was the first contact between Rabindranath and the Raj family of Tipperah. His *Sandhyā Saṅgīt* was published in 1882 and another opera called *Kāla-nṛgaṃyā* was enacted in 1882 and his *Vālmiki Pratibhā*

was published in 1881. Most of the songs and poems of this period show that the poet was passing through a whirlpool of emotions from which there was no way of escape. It is the mad intoxication of an extremely sensitive adolescent spirit. Being unable to give expression to it in terms of his own experience he did it through heroes and heroines of his little stories.

Already before he started for England he had learnt to set songs to tune. He had cultivated some music even in England and after his return he set his mind to the experiment of combining European and Indian tune. In this work he received much encouragement from his brother Jyotirindranath Tagore. In the Tagore family there were dramatic performances constantly held and the house was surcharged with a musical atmosphere. He had the opportunity from his childhood to listen to good songs and to practise music in a scientific manner. Viharilal's *Sārādā Maṅgal* was published in 1879 and Rabindranath returned to India at the end of that year. The work had deeply impressed upon him and he wrote his first musical opera in which various types of tunes were wedded together and it bore also the impress of *Sārādā Maṅgal*. In 1881 this opera was enacted in the Tagore family. *Kāla-mṛgayā* written by Rabindranath describing the episode of the murder of Andha Munis son by Dasaratha was also a drama of the same type as *Vālmiki Pratibhā*. Later on large portions of *Kāla-mṛgayā* were assimilated and reshuffled into *Vālmiki Pratibhā*. It is for this reason that *Kāla-mṛgayā* has not been incorporated separately in the poetical works of the poet. The *Kāla-mṛgayā* was also enacted as a separate drama two years after *Vālmiki Pratibhā* was enacted. Rabindranath was an adept actor from his youth and in all the plays played at this time he was the principal actor.

His stay in England and his familiarity with English Literature had brought home to him the fact that there is a great dearth of good poetry and great thoughts in Bengali. Good poetry and great thoughts or even great achievements in Science can be attained only through strong and well-regulated imagination backed by study and sturdy perseverance. The country that produced Shakespeare had produced also Newton. In referring to the reason of the deplorable condition of Bengal with respect to creative work he remarked as follows: Natural indolence and natural lifelessness and disinclination to all things—this is what has restrained Bengalees from becoming true men. We see all things through half-shut eyes and our curiosity is but little. We are apathetic to the charms of Nature and have kept ourselves away from the struggle of life (see *Bhāratī*, B.S. 1287). Speaking of poetry at this time Rabindranath says poetry is an expression of an ideal world which exists side by side with the practical world in which we live. He refers to the poetic joy and a sort of pensive

emotion which manifests the yearning of the finite for the infinite. Thus he says (in *Bhāratī*, B.S. 1288):—*Bhābuk lok mātrai anubhav kariācen ye āmarā mājhe mājhe ekprakār biṣaṇṇa sukher bhāv anubhav kari. Tāhā koṃal viśad aprakhar sukh. Tāhā ār kichu nay, sīmā haite asīmer prati nētrapāt.* At this time he was engaged in other thoughtful writings also among which one may mention his speech on music in the Bethune College Hall under the auspices of the Bethune society in which he sought to express the theory of music as being the expression of sentiments.

AGE OF SANDHYĀ-SANGĪT

(When Rabindranath was twenty years old)

Rabindranath was staying with Jyotirindranath in a house on the Ganges in Chandernagore after his return from Mussouric. He confesses that it was then when he first realised that poetry consists in giving expression to one's free spontaneity and individuality. This was first manifested in his *Sandhyā-saṅgīt*. Temporally there was not much difference between *Saiśava-saṅgīt* and *Sandhyā-saṅgīt* the former being published in 1881 and the latter in 1880. But there was much difference in characteristic grasp and expression in his experiment with poetry in *Saiśava Saṅgīt* he was dimly conscious of an ideal which he could not reach. He was running amock as it were in wilderness but in the poems of the *sandhyā Saṅgīt* he seems to have discovered his way and attained faith and courage in the prosecution of his work. In his later life Rabindranath did not think much of his poetical compositions in the *Sandhyā Saṅgīt* but he set great value to his first discovery of spontaneity and independence in writing poetry. *Sandhyā Saṅgīt* had at this time secured many admirers. In 1882 on the occasion of the marriage of Romesh Dutta's daughter with P. N. Bose, Romesh Chandra Dutt was offering a garland to Bankim Chandra as the greatest novelist of the day, but Bankim Chandra turned round and pointing to Rabindranath said that this garland was rightfully due to the author of *Sandhyā Saṅgīt*.

It is true that the poems of the *Sandhyā Saṅgīt* reveal a fever of love and yearning, a sort of burning flame which was consuming the poet. But the poet was no neurotic; for, at the very time that these poems were being written he was busy writing various essays in which his sympathy, patriotism and a love of an universal character was being expressed. He was protesting against the sale of opium in China, against the insulting writings of the Anglo-Indian papers against our countrymen and at the same time writing against the false sense of nationalism that often inspired our people and he pleaded for moderation and self-control in every sphere of conduct. He

was writing on the function of music, rediculing our marriage system. He was also publishing meanings of old Vaiṣṇava Bengali poems. In another article called *Yathārtha Dosar* he was trying to explain the meaning that found expression in his poems. He says there that sentimental or emotional people have always an ideal yearning of love which cannot be satisfied with what is available to him. He has no concrete image of the object of love. He is only aware that his love is not to be satisfied with any of those that is being offered to him as objects of love. This is a romantic spirit of which ancient writers were ignorant. He had the craving of love for the Infinite and Formless, and love is not chained down merely to the infatuation of what is available. Speaking of lyric poetry at this time he says that lyric poetry is transcendent in character. It takes the mind from the sensuous to another world. Even if there be not any similarity with the visible and the tangible world yet that world is a real world. The subject of poetry is something that is far away.

- About the year 1882 his new novel *Bau Ṭhākuraṇi Hāt* began to be published.

THE AGE OF PRABHĀTI-SANGĪT

From the house at Chundernagore Rabindranath returned to 10, Sudder Street house near the Museum. The poet was at this time trying to come at peace with himself as is evident from his poem *Sangrām Saṅgīt* written about 1881. In a paper called *Ātmotsarga* published in the *Bhārati* this time the poet takes a resolution that he would free himself from his sufferings and would no longer be dependent upon others' whims, for love means nothing but beggary and supplication. He resolved that he should no longer dance round himself, but must find a way out. Rabindranath had already become self-analytic. He was intuitively perceiving within him the important fact that life and mind are continually recreating themselves and that though these creations may have only a temporal value in this that they are designed to the end of creating something different, something nobler, something greater, yet the creations of each moment, though they are but means to a greater end, have independent value. This appears in a essay called *Samāpana* in his *Vividha Prasāṅga* which has now become very scarce. Thus he says,—*Jīvaner pratimuhūrte maner gaṭhan kārya chaliteche. . . . Aj jāhā āche āji tāhā dekha. Kāl thākibe nā baliā cokh bujiba keno. Āmār hṛdaye pratyaha jāhā janmiyāche, jāhā phuṭiāche tāhā pātūr mata, phaler mata tomāder sanmukhe prasārta kariyā dilām*, It should be noted that his central principle of life as he discovered later on and which has been traced by us as being due to Hegelian or Bergsonian

influence was already perceived by him intuitively in experience. It was because he had this experience himself that the more articulate views in that line of Hegel and Bergson had an appeal to him in later life. But we cannot say definitely that these ideas were not suggested to him by some Hegelian writer.

At this time Jyotirindranath had established a Literary Society called *Kalikātā Sāraswat Sammilanī* and Rabindranath became its chief worker. He was at this time writing many articles criticising the writers of contemporary Bengal including *Meghanād Vadha*. He thought that most of the Bengali writings of the day including that of Madhusudan were but an imitation of foreign literature. He was also writing criticism of other Bengali works including *Viṣa Vṛkṣa* and had given us a theory of tragedy that tragedy consists in the vanity of our efforts. The union of Nagendra and Suryamukhi in *Viṣ-Vṛkṣa* became tragic because it was associated with the suicide of *Kundanandini*. A work published at this time called *Bāuler Gān* was reviewed by Rabindranath and it was pointed out by him that it is in songs like these that the real genius of the Bengali poets revealed itself as distinguished from writings of contemporary people which was largely an invitation of English poetry. He also published at this time some folk songs current among the Bengali boatmen.

Some of the songs of the *Prabhāt Saṅgīt* were published between 1882-83. The poem *Nirjharer Svapnabhaṅga* was the poet's first enlightenment as he calls. It has been discussed in detail elsewhere. In his childhood he was intimately associated in love with Nature, but with slow dawning of adolescence he was separate from Nature and was imprisoned in the forest of his heart, exit from which was difficult. It was in the *Prabhāt Saṅgīt* that the door was broken open and he could again embrace Nature with a thrill of new enlightenment. We have here the thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. In some of his later poems and writings he has repeatedly pointed out this truth that true union can be effected only through the sorrow of separation. In one of his early songs the poet says:

In early childhood I played in joy
 O! Nature, Mother, in that sweet lap of yours.
 Then what happened, where did I go?
 I lost my way, in the forest of the heart
 Of pathless infinity.

As he comes out of the forest of his heart he says,—“Today a bird showed me the way and brought me out of the forest to the banks of the sea of joy.”

In *Prabhāt Saṅgīt* we thus find the joy of the poet in the social and external world of man and Nature.

It may be remembered that Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee was sent to jail in July 1883 and in the same month a national fund was started for political work and in 1883 the Indian National Conference was called as the harbinger of the Congress. Rabindranath kept himself away from all these movements. He distinguished in all his writings patriotism from nationalism. And in his essay *Cemcie Balā* and *Jihvā Āsphālan* he severely criticised the mere haughty speeches for stimulating nationalism from what constitutes the real goodwill to the people. He asked people to turn to their real needs and their duties instead of making speeches of beggary to the British Government. Self-reliance was for him the essence of patriotism. (See *Akāl Kuṣmāṇḍa* and *Tāun Haler Tāmāsā*, 1883).

THE AGE OF CHAVI-O-GĀN

We know that *Prabhāt Saṅgīt* was published in 1883 in the month of Vaiśākh, and in a few months *Nīśitha Cetanā* and *Nīśitha Jagat*—which contained verses from *Chavi-o-Gān*. At this time Rabindranath went to Bombay and was staying with Satyendranath his brother. The inspiration of the natural scenery there was responsible for the writing of *Chavi-o-Gān* and *Prakṛtir Pratiśodh*. The main story of *Prakṛtir Pratiśodh* is that an ascetic renounced the world for realising the Brahman as if Brahman was something outside the world, but in the end he was loved by a young girl and it is through her love, the concrete, the definite, the finite that he found the way to his infinite realisation. This idea was indeed the Keynote of much of what he wrote in his later life. Thus he says in *Jīvan Smṛti*, *Kāvya hisābe Prakṛtir Pratiśodher sthān ki lāhā jāninā, kintu jā spaṣṭa dekhā jāiteche, ai ekṭi mātra ādiya alakṣya bhāve nānā beśe ai paryanta āmār samasta racanāke adhikār kare base āche*. He had already returned to Calcutta and was staying in a house in Circular Road and writing essays and the poems of *Chavi-o-Gān*. He was reading a lot of Western thought by master writers and was gradually becoming thoughtful and analytic. On the other hand he was feeling intensely the intoxication of love which was surging in and through him. He had not yet the ripe hand for drawing full and complete pictures, but still he felt almost a mad frenzy for drawing pictures in rhyme and metre whatever appeared to him in the outer or in the inner world. Describing his mental attitude at the time of writing these poems to Mr. Pramatha Nath Choudhury in a letter published in the *Sabuj Patra* (B.S. 1324 Śrāvaṇa) he says that a poet feels two different rings in his mind. One like the skylark in Shelly which

chooses to go beyond all heights and the other like the *Skylark* of Wordsworth which is anxious for the love of the concrete and the finite. In the life of the true poet these two rings must be harmonised.

THE AGE OF KAPĪ-O-KOMAL

(When Rabindranath was 23-24 years old)

Rabindranath was married in 1883 in his Jorasanko house with the daughter of Venimadhab Rai Choudhury according to the rites of the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Within a year from this Jyotirindranath's wife died and as she was associated with Rabindranath in most of his literary effusions he was very much affected by it and he gave vent to this sorrow in a work called *Puṣpāñjali*. But he was of a virile temper and was able soon to overcome this sorrow and prepare his mind for ringing in the new. This period however began to be fertile with songs. In the meanwhile Jyotirindranath had started a steamer service between Khulna and Barisal. The venture however completely collapsed after a short time and Jyotirindranath was utterly ruined. In his patriotic writings of the period Rabindranath emphasised the necessity of individual ventures in small spheres. In 1884 he was elected Secretary of the Adi Brahmo Samaj and Dwijendranath, leaving aside the editorship of the *Bhārati*, became editor of the *Tattva-bodhinī* journal and *Vaṅga Darśan* had ceased in 1883. At this time a conflict between the Hindu and the Brahmo Samaj was becoming keen. By 1883 Sasadhar Tarka Chudamani captured the Hindu Society by his scientific interpretation of Hindu religion. On quite a different line Bankim Chandra was writing his *Dharmatattva* in the two journals *Pracār* and *Nava Jīvan* edited by Bankim Chandra's son-in-law Rakhal Chandra and Akshoy Kumar Sarkar respectively. In addition to these there were also Chandra Nath Bose and Akshoy Chandra Sarkar, two veteran supporters of Hindu religion. Rabindranath as the Secretary of the Adi Brahmo Samaj completely identified himself with the Brahmo creed which is manifested in the religious controversy between Bankim Chandra and Rabindranath as published in the article *Dharma Jigñāsā* by Bankim Chandra in the *Nava Jīvan* (B.S. 1291) and its reply by Rabindranath in *Tattva-bodhinī* (B.S. 1291). At this time Rabindranath in association with his friend Srish Chandra Majumdar published *Pada Ratnāvalī* in 1885. He at this time wrote another drama called *Nālinī* on the model of *Bhagna Hṛday* and *Māyār Khelā*. In 1885 a new journal (monthly) called *Bālak* was brought out under the patronage of Jñanada Nandini Devi wife of Satyendranath. The charge of running the paper fell on Rabindranath. It was in this *Bālak* that Rabindranath wrote

poems for children such as *Bṛṣṭi Paḍe Tāpur Ṭupur, Sāt Bhāi Campā, Hāsi Rāsi, Mā Lakṣmī, Ākul Āhvān* and also possibly *Māyer Āśū*, and *Kāṅgālinī, Mukul Khukur Chaḍā* and *Rājarṣi* were also published in *Bālak* in which he tried to make clear the position of the controversy between the older and the younger generations, and in others he attacked the aggressive Hinduism of the day. The poems of the *Kaḍi-O-Komal* was published in 1886. In a second edition it was associated with *Chabi-O-Gān* and *Bhānu Siṃher Padāvalī* the first edition of which had been exhausted. We may remember in this connection that an article on Ram Mohan Roy which was read out in the City College Hall was published first in the *Bhārati* and then in *Tattva-bodhini Patrikā* 1888. His book of essays *Ālocanā* was published in the same year and so also a collection of his songs under the name *Rabichāyā* divided into 3 sections *Vividha Saṅgīt, Brahma Saṅgīt* and *Jātiya Saṅgīt*. His *Rājarṣi* based upon a story of the Tippera Raj family was published in 1887. It was on the basis of it that later on he published the drama *Visarjan* 1890. A collection of letters in the name of *Ciṭhi Patra* was first published in the *Bālak* in 1887 and later on reprinted in the essay book *Samāj* in 1898. Another book of essays called *Samālocanā* most of which were published in the *Bhārati* was published in 1888. We may remember that the poet's *Nalinī* a prose drama was published in 1884. It was more or less on this model that he wrote his opera *Māyār Khelā*, full of songs and published in 1888. It was performed at the Mahilā Silpa Melā of the *Sakhi Samiti*. The notations of this drama were published in the *Sādhana* journal by Mrs. Indira Choudhury. The *Rājā-O-Rāṇī* was his first properly written drama. It was followed by his drama *Visarjan* in 1890. In the same year he read a paper called *Mantrī Abhisek* in the Emerald Dramatic Hall on the occasion of a protest meeting on Lord Crosses Bill. In the same year *Mānasī* was published. Our review on *Kaḍi-O-Komal, Mānasī* etc. will be taken in its due place.

When he was writing the poems of the *Mānasī* he was also writing essays such as *Ekānnavarī Parivār, Durvākya, Sāhityer Uddeśya Ki*, and *Hindu Vivāha*. He also engaged himself at this time in a controversy about early marriage against Chandra Nath Bose and Akhoy Sarkar, two well known writers, as also with Bhudev Babu. It may not be out of place here to say a few words about *Māyār Khelā*. In this musical opera Amar a young man loves Santa a young girl, but not being able to understand that his love was being responded to Amar went away and Santa did not obstruct him thinking that he might be more happy by loving some other girl. In the course of his travels Amar meets Pramada whom he loves. Here also he is unable to understand whether Pramada loves him or not.

So he came back again to Santa and when their wedding was going to be effected Pramada comes in. Everybody understands that both Pramada and Amar loved each other. But Pramada says she was too late. So Santa and Amar become married. Within a few months of his writing *Māyār Khela* he wrote *Rājā-O-Rāñī*. The idea that Rabindranath wishes to emphasise in this drama is that selfish love is mere infatuation which destroys the true spirit of love. True love can only grow through self-control and self-sacrifice. Mere desire means disaster in love. The story of *Rājā-O-Rāñī* was re-written in another form in *Tapatī*. The ideal of this true love was expressed by the poet in his *Mānasī*.

About the year 1898 he was writing the poems *Megha-dūta*, *Ahalyār Prati*, etc. Speaking of his *Megha-dūta*, written at this time, he says that rainy season restricts ones activities and this is what causes a sense of loneliness in the rains. The Yakṣa being shut in his cave was imposing his desire of roaming about the hills and dales on the cloud. Speaking of his poems at this period he says that he was all this time feeling a change of attitude but not of advance. Until he could realise his final evolution and expressions, all the changing literary creation are to be regarded as having only a tentative value. But he had the confidence in him that ultimately he would be able to create a solid foundation for him, though he cannot regard such self-confidence as being in any way any proof of the possibility of his future success. He was oscillating between confidence and doubt. He was feeling a sort of conflict between the world of law and order and his free spirit. He started again for England in August 1890. But he soon got tired of England. In 1891 he published his *Yurope Yātrīr Dāiri* in the *Sādhana* journal.

Now when Rabindranath was about 28 or 29 he was charged with the duty of supervising the affairs of their estate. In taking up his new duties he had to come and live directly with the people of the land but he had not forgotten his literary ambition and he was at this time writing the short stories which were being published in the newly started journal *Hita-vādī*. It is at this time also that he wrote his *Citrāṅgadā* in 1892 and also the farce called *Gorāy Galad*. About this time in 1891 he engaged himself in a controversy with Chandra Nath Basu who tried to prove that vegetarian diet contributes to our spirituality.

About 1891 appeared *Sonār Tari*. The work was written in the environment of nature and the village life of Bengal in Silaidaha.

About the age 31 Rabindranath was writing a lot of literary criticism. He used to complain against the English novels regarding their complexity and multiplicity of facts and details. He regarded literature as the vehicle of self-expression in which the writer gives an expression of his personality

as it is effected by its relationship with external nature and with society. Literature does not express merely all that is momentary in a person but the integral reality of the poet's personality. It is also through literature that we express the total humanity that grows about us, neither nature nor beauty are by themselves objects of the literary art.

Rabindranath was at this time writing many essays, engaged sometimes in controversy with Lokendra Nath Palit on the nature of literature, and sometimes with Chandra Nath Basu regarding the nature of Brahman as qualified and unqualified. It may be remembered that the supporters of Neo-Hinduism had at this time taken a situation in which they were prepared to accept both the doctrine of pure monism and idol worship. According to Rabindranath man was not a machine but a spiritual personality working in his freedom and reason; he may commit mistakes but in and through them alone can he find his true place. But when he was thus engaged in the controversy with the upholders of neo-Hinduism he was also writing these poems such as *Suplotthita*, *Tomrā-O-Āmrā*, *Sonār Bandhan*, *Varṣa Yāpan* etc. (1892), as also probably *Him Tīm Chaṭ* and *Kṣepā Khumje Phere Paraś Pāthar*. He was feeling very wild in his mind in his conflict between the orderly society of laws and rules and his personal spontaneity, as also the conflict of the duality of inclination that exists in man tending him at once beyond and to his home on this earth. He was also engaged at this time in enquiries regarding Bengali grammar and literature. At this time Rabindranath was about 31 years old and he was writing numerous essays on political, social and educational subjects. In some of his letters written at this time he expresses how intuitively he felt the identity between Nature and himself. An idea of this type also finds expression in his poem *Mānasa Sundarī*.

The most important point about the evolution of Rabindranath's personality in his youthful days must have been quite evident by this time to our readers. He is essentially a poet and poetry was particularly suited as the vehicle of his self expression but he was also a thinker and a critic. Patriotism was burning within him and his pen was directed in his prose writings towards opening the political social and religious consciousness of the people. Sometimes he was an adept in bantering in the most cruel manner his enemies in his satires. He was reading a lot and thinking deeply of the aim and the materials of literature, the principles of education and its vehicle, the necessity of introducing Bengali as the medium of education. But in every sphere of thought he displayed a sobriety of understanding and self-control and would not be thrown out of his feet by the stormy waves of ordinary public opinion. He keenly felt the insulting treatment of the Anglo-Indians towards the Indians. But

he was neither an anarchist nor a revolutionary. He was in favour of the attainment of moral power through self-control, self-help, self-consideration and genuine sympathy towards the people of our country and was not in favour of approaching the governing classes with the begging bowl in every case of difficulty.

But Rabindranath was not only alive to the oppression of his own people by the governing classes, but his heart cried in sympathy with the oppressed people of the world. He was a cosmopolitan and a humanitarian at heart and oppressions in China and South Africa by the Europeans set his heart ablaze. And he wrote many articles on such subjects. At the same time he felt extremely annoyed at the narrow bigotry of his own countrymen which by its system of untouchability and castes set up barriers between man and man. It may be remembered that a young Swedish, Amargren by name, had been attracted by the English writings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and came to Bengal to spend his life in the service of his country. At the time of his death he expressed the wish that he may be cremated in the Hindu manner. This was opposed by the Hindu community and he wrote his article, *Bideśi Atithi O Hindu Atithya*. He was at this time writing short stories. In some of his stories he has given vent to the unbearable treatment of the English officers towards the natives of the country. In his individual behaviour he always encouraged his countrymen to retaliate when they were insulted, for by such retaliation alone will the officials of an alien people come to their senses (See *Apamāner Pratikār*).

The Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad was started in 1894 and in its third monthly meeting Navin Chandra Sen and Rabindranath became its Vice-President. His *Chinnapatra* appeared in 1894 and he was at this time collecting the folk songs of Bengal and also writing his memorable poem *Jīvana Devatā*. At the age of 33 he had begun publishing criticism or reviews on books in the *Sāadhanā* journal and became acquainted with D. L. Roy and as a matter of fact did much to make him known as a poet. He was also at this time criticising the Government measure of taxing foreign and Indian clothes. He was at this time also continuing writing short stories. Rabindranath was so long carrying on the editorship of the *Sāadhanā* but he was by nature incapable of pursuing routine duties and after 4 years he gave up the editorship of the *Sāadhanā* and it collapsed. His *Sonār Tari*, *Vicitra Galpa* and *Kathā Catuṣṭay* was published in 1894, in 1895 he published his *Galpa Daśaka*. In 1896 he published his *Nadī*, *Citrā* and a collection of his writings was published by Satya Prasad Ganguly in the same year. In 1897 a farce called *Vaikunṭher Khātā* and a series of essays called *Pañca Bhūta* was published. *Kṣaṇikā* was published

in 1899, *Kathā O Kāhinī*, *Kalpanā*, *Kṣaṇikā* and *Galpa-Guccha* Part I were also published in the same year. After his *Citrā*, he started *Caitālī* and it was completed by 1896, within a short time of the completion of *Citrā*. All through his poems of the time he was trying to express his idea that man's true end in this world was the attainment of complete comprehension of the Universe, its Master and its Destiny.

In the year 1897 there was a partition of the Tagore Estate. He wrote his *Mālinī* in 1896. The story was based upon a Buddhist legend. Malini the daughter of the King of Kasi had accepted Buddhism. This enraged the Brahmins, two leaders of which were Supriya and Khemankar. They demanded Malini's punishment. Malini appeared before the assemblage of Brahmins and they were appeased. Only Khemankar went away to collect an army to drive away the King of Kasi. But Supriya remained and came in contact with Malini and fell in love with her. Supriya betrayed Khemankar and when he was brought in chains on the pretext of talking with Supriya, he got closer to him, struck him with his chains and killed him. Khemankar remained unswerving in his resolution. But afterwards he obtained pardon at the intercession of Malini. In 1901 the second part of *Galpa-Guccha*, *Naivedya*, *Oupanishada Brahma* and *Bāṅgalā Kriyā Pader Tālikā* were published. In B.S. 1304, i.e., 1897, when the poet was 36 years old he started writing his *Śreṣṭha Bhikṣā*, *Gāndhārīr Āvedan*, *Patitā*, *Bhāṣā O Chanda*, *Devalār Gṛās* and also the poems of *Kalpanā*.

Rabindranath had accepted the editorship of the *Bhāratī* in 1898. He was now writing short stories and mainly political essays. In 1898 he published in the *Bhāratī* a paper called *Kaṇṭha Rodh*. It was a protest against the policy of the then Government to stifle the expression of public opinion. Politics had taken a new turn with Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Tilak was trying to get all the Hindus together under an apparently simple institution, viz., 'Society for the prevention of killing of cows'. Tilak had also introduced the universal worship of Gaṇeśa as a means of uniting the Hindus. Rabindranath was not personally known to Tilak at first. But the latter was prepared to send him fifty thousand rupees for going to England not for political propaganda but for doing his own work which however Rabindranath refused. In the meanwhile the plague officer Mr. Rand was murdered in Bombay and B. G. Tilak was charged with being indirectly responsible for it. Rabindranath and Mr. Hemchandra Mullick approached the public to help the Tilak Case. Lord Curzon came as the Viceroy in 1898. Rabindranath was now attacking the Government against the oppression of the plague stricken people in Poona. The oppressive measures of Lord Curzon and his methods of suppressing public

opinion produced turmoil all over India. He protested against the peaceful habits of his countrymen which gave the foreign rulers more opportunities for becoming oppressive. The Provincial conference was held in Dacca in 1898 under the Presidency of Rev. K. M. Banerjee. On his return from Dacca Rabindranath strongly criticised the attitude of the members of the Conference who did not look upon such conferences as occasions for furthering the country's cause but for enjoying the feasts and playing as magnates. Within a few years of this Bengal was partitioned and Rabindranath wrote many articles to prove the provincial unity not only between Eastern and Western Bengal but also between Bengal and Orissa and Assam. In an article called *Bhāratīya Itihāser Dhārā* he showed how the problem of the fusion of the races was solved in ancient times in the story of *Rāmāyaṇa* through love and sympathy of Rama and he also reminded us of the fact that the same problem holds today and the same means should be adopted even now. He pointed out that Indians had never been politically conscious as a nation and they do not possess the liberality of mind that a great nation must possess. We are torn asunder with narrow ideals of caste, creed and habitation. We can neither imitate the Europeans nor can follow our own orthodoxy. Against the habit of imitating European customs he wrote two articles *Koṭi O Cāpkān* and *Nakaler Nakal*. He also in his articles tried to show that the Zemindars of Bengal had no right to consider themselves as the leaders of political thought. The aristocracy of England cannot be compared with the Zemindars of Bengal, as the former has the glow of antiquity in it which the latter does not possess. In brief, leadership of the country cannot be based upon wealth. The Zemindars are too much dependant for the favour of the Government to be regarded as the friends of the people. He held before the Zemindars of Bengal the ideal of serving the people as their ancestors did. In the present time if the Zemindars do any good to the people that is done for receiving titles from the Government. He also attacked in another article the so-called leaders of the people, the platform speakers. Rabindranath also engaged himself in a controversy as to whether the Godhead should be regarded as formless or as being endowed with form. He strongly repudiated the views of Babu Jyotindra Mohan Singha in favour of idol-worship. He also wrote articles on folk-literature and also published reviews of books, such as his review of Dinesh Sen's *Vaṅga Bhāṣā O Sāhitya* and some of the works of Akshoy Kumar Maitreya and the like. At this time he also published his poem *Varṣa Śeṣ* in 1898.

It may be remembered that some years ago Balendranath and Surendranath Tagore had opened a Jute industry at Kushthia and Rabindranath had joined it. He was engaged in various other duties and

trouble in the year. Rabindranath could not properly supervise the jute business. The result was that the jute business collapsed, and Rabindranath had to discharge the entire debts of the firm as he had on his own initiative closed the work. We know that his *Kaṇikā* and *Kathā O Kāhinī* was published in 1899 and 1900 respectively. His *Kalpanā* was also published in 1900. Rabindranath had before this written two farcical works *Gorāy Galad* and *Vaikunṭher Khātā*. At the request of his niece Sarala Devi he wrote another farcical work *Cirakumār Sabhā* in 1891. We may remember that Swami Vivekananda was at this time taking the Hindu Society by storm as it were and had revitalised Hindu thought. He had also started a system of monastic life wherein unmarried men took vows to dedicate themselves in the service of humanity. Possibly Rabindranath's *Cirakumār Sabhā* was a satirical reflection on this system. He regarded unmarried life as unnatural.

Rabindranath was now 40 and had come to the full maturity of his genius. This finds its expression in his *Naivedya* published in 1901. It is surcharged with the Upaniṣadic ideal. He showed his anxiety to extend his love to all humanity by concrete efforts, by new ties of affection, and not to take himself away and shut himself up in Yoga. He was also anxious to discover if the great diversity and difference of the people of India could be annulled through a deeper realisation of religion. He was inspired with the sense of patriotism and his mind was softened with sympathy for the sufferings of humanity. On the one hand there was the ideal of the hermitage of ancient Indian and on the other hand there was the stern reality of the condition of the people of Bengal. On one occasion when Rabindranath was 25 he had sung a song before his father *Nayana tomāre pāynā dekhite* and was given a prize of five hundred rupees. After writing *Naivedya* he sought a blessing from his father—a prayer of opening a School in Santiniketan. The prayer was granted. Rabindranath was now aged forty.

Now in 1901 a new series of *Vaṅga Darśan* was published and Rabindranath became the editor for some time. The ideal of this institution was to raise before us the ideal of ancient India in the modern changed conditions. The chief fault of European civilisation was the ideal of nationalism, which tried always to place the interests of each nation before those of others, to place individual nations above the demands of humanity. The fault of Indian civilisation was not in the establishment of *Varṇāśrama Dharma* but in the attitude that it took in later times in hurting the natural sense of right and good in humanity. It is our duty now to affiliate ourselves with the spirit of ancient India when our society was living.

Cokher Bāli, his first great novel was published in 1903.

It is to be noted that Vivekananda the other great leader of Hindu thought at the time was a contemporary of Rabindranath being of the same age. When Rabindranath was about 40 Vivekananda returned from America and was given a great ovation the like of which had seldom happened in the case of any other person. He was supposed to have brought about a syntheses between the formless nature of God and God as endowed with forms, the two apparently opposite views supposed to be preached by Hinduism. The appreciation that he received in Western countries is regarded as the conquest of Hinduism. He thus attained a position in the country that was absolutely unique. He had established a system of monasticism and was engaged actively in public service. By his speeches and by his social service as well as by his synthetic views on Hinduism he captivated the minds of the Hindu public, but it is curious to note that there is little reference to Vivekananda in Rabindranath's writings either by way of controversy or by exchange of friendly views. Yet Rabindranath was at that time inspired with the ideals of the system of hermitage in ancient India and his mind was trying to come in tune with the spirit of Brahma worship in its prescribed form. It may be remembered that Lala Munshiram otherwise known as Sraddhananda was at this time establishing the Gurukula Āśram in the Vedic pattern.

It may be remembered that Devendranath had purchased 20 bighas of land at Bolepur in 1863 when Rabindranath was only 2 years old and built a house there. In 1887 he made over the Santiniketan house and land to the public by a trust deed for the use of those who wanted to spend their life in meditation in solitary surroundings. Idol worship was prohibited and only vegetarian meals were allowed. Apart from this there was no further restriction. In 1891 a *Melā* was introduced for the 7th Paus in commemoration of Devendranath's day of initiation. In B.S. 1304 Rabindranath spent some time here writing some of his short dramas. In B.S. 1304 Balendranath Tagore had built a one-storied house for the instruction of Brahmonism. In B.S. 1308 Rabindranath spent sometime in Bolepur. So Rabindranath was now and then coming and living at Santiniketan. But it was now when the school at Santiniketan was opened that Rabindranath centred all his energies to the development of a new ideal in education through his school (1903). In his articles written in the *Vaṅga Darśan* at this time he was trying to interpret the ideal of Indian civilisation in consonance with the ideal of Eastern civilisation as a whole as distinguished from Western civilisation, to established unity in difference as being the aim of India as against the ideal of the west in emphasising difference.

But amidst all his literary activities his virile mind was always alert

with regard to the changes in the political situation and he wrote scathing criticisms of the convocation address of Lord Curzon as well as of the Delhi Durbar. Rabindranath's wife died in 1903 when Rabindranath was 41 years old and he published the poems called *Smaraṇa* or in Memoriam. But Rabindranath bore his sorrow calmly and we do not find any reference to his wife's death except in these poems. In 1906 *Naukā Ḍubi* a novel was published and in the same year his collection of poems called *Kheyā*. In 1907 a number of his essays appeared in collective forms such as *Vicitra Prabandha*, *Prācīn Sāhitya*, *Lokasāhitya*, *Sāhitya*, *Ādhunik Sāhitya*, *Hāsyā Kautuk* and *Byāṅga Kautuk*. In 1908 were published *Prajāpatir Nirbandha*, *Pābnā Sammilanir Abhibhāṣaṇ*, *Rājā O Prajā*, *Svadeś*, *Samāj*, *Kathā O Kāhinī*, *Gān*, *Śāradotsav*, a drama, *Śikṣā* and *Mukut* a drama.

We may now take a review of the first fifty years of Rabindranath's life story. The life-story of a person or individual is his living responses mental and physical to the environment surrounding him. He was born at a time when the British had established their Govt. for more than 100 years and when the Calcutta University had already been founded. The treatment of the English officials and even non-official tradesmen to the natives of the country had from day to day been regarded as intolerable. Individual cases of bad treatment and mock trials of bad judges in favour of the white accused had roused many patriots of the time to shower abuses and vituperation in the columns of the newspapers against the governing classes. The sepoy mutiny had preceded Rabindranath's birth only by a few years. Though the actual mutiny was subjugated the mutinous mind of Bengal remained as active as a volcano. On the occasion of Durbar held by Lord Lytton the ill treatment accorded to the natives by the Indigo-Planters and last of all when Lord Curzon had to spread his imperialistic ideas and abused the natives of India by his speeches and finally effected the partition of Bengal the political consciousness of the people rose to its highest and found its expression in that political body called the Indian National Congress which was through all vicissitudes taking a distinct form and shape to challenge the undue and unconstitutional demand of the reigning people. It is not for me to enter into details and delineating the political history of the time. It was only important for us to point out that Rabindranath was one of the first to chirp and coo at this early dawn of political consciousness in India and he had the good fortune to keep himself in tune with the gradually growing aspirations of the country. But there was a method which distinguished his political approaches from those of other people. His own native genius as well as mental environment of his family were both responsible for it. Elsewhere in describing the nature of the tendencies of Rabindranath's genius—the mould in which

he catches his experiences, has been described by us. We have said there that he believed in the Divinity of creative activity working and building in the interest of the growth of his Psyche. He believed also in the Divinity of a creative activity which is continually creating and re-creating the external world. He believed also that these two were identical and that we can apprehend this identity not so much by reason as by sympathetic intuition, and love. Love was the cementing principle of the world. Our union with the world is at first meaningless and dumb which attains meaning only when our love extends to men. The creative spirit within and without wells up in all its wealth through the profusion of love. We can apply another terminology also to explain the situation. We may regard ourselves as continually anxious for self-expression and the external world is also always approaching us seeking their expression at our hands. Remembering such formula if we review Rabindranath's attitude towards the political situation, we find that Rabindranath's political attitude may be regarded almost as a deduction from the above formula. In dealing with private assaults and insults from white men, he was in favour of following the Mosaic law; by this means alone we may become conscious of the dignity of humanity in us and rouse the same dignity in our white opponents however indignant he may be at the time. But in dealing with our relations between the governing people of the Government he was not in favour of the policy of making petitions and approaching the Government for help for every little thing that we wanted. He advocated the policy of self-help with definite constructive programmes. In this, of course, he was not much in consonance with the current policy of the National Congress of the time. But his own family was surcharged with the idea as is evidenced by the opening of *Melās* and the business ventures of his brother Jyotirindranath Tagore. In his criticisms against the Government he could be as trenchantly satirical as possible. He also criticised his own people who wanted to imitate the English in dress, manners and customs. In his dress, manners and customs he always wanted to emphasise the fact that he appreciated his dignity as an Indian. In his speeches also he was anxious to claim that the Indians have a civilisation of which they should be as much proud as a Britisher may be of his. He was not in favour of encouraging hatred against the British, but was anxious to meet them on equal terms—a privilege that cannot be obtained by means of beggary. He distinguished between real patriotism as sincere love of one's country from the co-called nationalism which latter was pivoted on egotism. He often remarked that in most of the political conferences of the time he did not notice any sincere display of love for the people of the country. The atmosphere of such conferences was

charged with vanity of all kinds. As he hated beggary in politics, he also hated the spirit contained in the resolution that we should have nothing to do with the Government only because of the fact that even if we beg on our knees, the Government would not give anything to us. He said that self-respect ought to bar us from going about with begging bowls. We must try to attain whatever we can by our own efforts. We might build small village constitutions to which we may offer our voluntary obedience. In this way we may establish a dual Government and concentrate ourselves to agriculture, education and similar other nation-building pursuits. In the time of the partition of Bengal he joined the political movement, went out in processions, composed and sang patriotic songs. When the foundation stone of the Federation Hall (on the site of the present Brahma Balika Vidyalaya) was laid he delivered a powerful speech. He joined many meetings. Rabindranath thus got into the whirlpool of political activities.

It may be remembered that the Prince of Wales visited India about 1905. The Congress was in favour of according welcome to him. Then at this time the Congress was dominated by politicians of the moderate type and there was constant struggle between the politics of the moderate and of the extreme type. Rabindranath declared that the relation between the British and us has not in it the traditional hallow of the relation between the sovereign and the subject. The British are foreigners who are here to demand our devotion not through natural ties of love but through the fear of running bayonets into us. He offered the most glowing tributes to those who are tyrannised by the Government. As we have mentioned above, the political activity of Bengal drew at its heights yet it was hampered by internal dissensions of the two parties known as moderates and extremists. Rabindranath did not identify himself with any party nor did he stand the squabble and quarrel of the two parties. He also was not in favour of the emphatically negative aspect of the boycott movement. To deny others would not be a sign of friendship but of hostility and we could afford to adopt the boycott policy only because of the indulgent attitude of the British Government with respect to this matter. On the whole, though he actively participated in the most intense form of political activity yet he did not forget himself nor was he disloyal to his inner creed or Dharma in the pursuit of his politics. His politics never became greater than his love for humanity. Inner humanity, rational understanding and love for our fellow-beings, self-help and a self-expression, a full appreciation of one's own self-respect and a self-respect of the people of the race to which he belonged—these were the most important aspects that contributed to the formation of his political views. He therefore could not please any of the parties that actively participated in the politics

at the time of the partition of Bengal. The extremists could not like him because he was never in favour of rash and hasty steps or begging in the form of bullying. The moderates could not like him because he was not prepared to enter into any quarrel or squabble with the extremists. But both of them held him in high respect. He often felt tired and fatigued by the seething political turmoils of the day and returned to poetry by way of taking holiday from politics. This again appears in many of the passages of *Kheyā* in 1906. Thus he says—

tomrā āji chuṭicha jār pāche
 se sab miche hoyece mor kāche
 ratna khomjā, rājya bhāṅgā gaḍā
 mater lāgi deśbideśe laḍā
 ālabāle jal secan karā
 ucca śākhā svarṇa cāmpār gāche
 pāri nā ār calte sabār pāche.

Again we must remember that when the political agitation of 1905 led to the foundation of the National Council of Education and many technical schools and when the young men of Bengal were inspired with a sort of hatred against the semi-official Calcutta University, Rabindranath stood firm in his convictions about the ideals of education and the methods of imparting it. The Santiniketan school has been started by him about 4 years before this new educational movement. In this school he wanted to give form to the ideal of ancient education as conceived by him. He was true to his own creed. If education must be a function of self-control, self-expression and love of nature and humanity—then no other barrier should stand in the way of the organisation of our thoughts in consonance with these ideals. He was in favour of a stern and well-controlled life in childhood and was in favour of imparting education by enlarging our sympathies and satisfying our curiosity through observation and experiment. We have seen that in the field of religious controversy that was being carried on early in his life, a legacy that we have from the time of Rammohan Roy, who had to fight on the one hand against the attacks of orthodox Hindus and Christians and on the other with the atheistic cultivated Indians of the Hindu college, Rabindranath always regarded himself as a Hindu and made a distinction between the so-called labelled religions and the true religion of Humanity. Formerly he was attached for a time to his father's renovated Hinduism but later on he moved faster than the creed of the Bharatvarsiya Brahma Samaj as founded by Keshab Chandra Sen. He was not a blind follower of any religion but had a

religion of his own which consisted largely in being able to regard nature and humanity as united with us in friendship and love where every suffering death or decay was an occasion for enlivening ourselves with new life.

Having retired from the active stage of politics, he again returned to poetry. It must be mentioned in this connection that it may well be expected that any one who entered into controversy with strong sections of the people should go unabused and Rabindranath had ample share of literary abuses and vituperations all through his life. He being of a very sensitive temperament suffered much from these criticisms. In the field of poetry also some of his poems were strongly criticised by the late poet D. L. Roy to whom he had often made many good turns. But suffering is the lot of sensitive minds and Rabindranath was no exception. But it must be said to his credit that though in earlier life he had also indulged himself in satirical and bantering tones, he was gradually gaining in sobriety and seldom hit back in an impassioned manner his opponents.

We shall in our next chapter pursue the story of Rabindranath and finish the picture which we leave here half-drawn.

THE STORY OF RABINDRANATH'S LIFE

In the meanwhile various circumstances were conspiring together to the formation of his programme for making a tour in England. He was suffering from piles and was averse to undergo an operation and thought that the climate of Europe and the medical treatment of experts there might prove beneficial to him. Sister Nivedita had translated his *Kābuliwālā* into English and this was published in the *Modern Review* in January, 1912. Mr. Rothenstein, the well-known art-connoisseur of England was delighted to read it and in his correspondence with Abanindranath had enquired if there were other specimens of similar stories. About 1911, Babu Ajit Kumar Chakravarty had gone to Oxford with the Manchester Scholarship to study Theology. He used there to translate some of Rabindranath's poems and often read them before the literary circles of Oxford. Rabindranath had also translated some of his poems and sent them to Rothenstein. Dr. Brojendra Nath Seal and Bhai Pramatha Lal Sen of the Nava-Vidhan Samaj were at this time in London and they had talked of Rabindranath to Rothenstein. They were all requesting Rabindranath to go to Europe and get himself acquainted with the poets and artists in England. Shortly before starting for England Rabindranath was preparing for his journey and translating some of his poems and writing songs which were later on incorporated in *Gītīmālyā*. These translations were not actually translations but they were transvaluations. The style that he adopted was neither flatly prose nor poetry. It was a sort of rhythmic prose. He collected poems from *Gītāñjali*, *Kheyā* and *Naivedya* and called them *Song-offerings* in this newly-translated form. Rabindranath was now 51 years of age and he started for Europe with his son Rathindranath and his daughter-in-law Pratima Devi on the 24th May, 1912. It may be remembered that Rabindranath first went to England when he was eighteen for prosecuting his studies, and then when he was twenty-nine for mere passion of travel. This was his third visit to Europe. He sailed from Bombay on the 27th May, 1912. His virile mind was responding to the new situations and he recorded them in letters and articles giving his impressions of Bombay as contrasted with Calcutta and also of his impressions of his life on board. It may not be out of place here to mention that his letters are not generally specimens of ordinary correspondence of facts. His letters have generally very little to do with facts. They are often impressions of his soul ; and all through his letters the impressions that he catch of his soul, the manner in which they respond

to external facts, events and situations, all reveal the same personality that we perceive in his poems and articles. They reveal his deep patriotism as well as his sense of humanity. We must remember in this connection that his patriotism is not of the nationalistic type. On the one hand it reveals a rapturous love for the ideal picture of cultured and cultivated India as it expressed itself in the Upaniṣadic days, on the other hand it expressed itself in his love for the Indian people and his solicitations not only for attaining a better economic welfare but the uplift of the country in morals, religion and ideals. His rapturous love for his idealistic India was not always correct in regard to present-day India, but in his poetic glow and fervour he often clothed the present-day India with the hallow and glory of its past. For this reason whenever he compared the civilisation of the East with that of the West, he always stressed the fact that the West is always merged in materiality and sinking in the mechanism of its culture but can seldom raise its head above the din and bustle of material work and can enjoy the blessings of meditation and submission which is the role of the Indian People.

After having reached England he spent some time in hotels. Then he fixed a house in Hampstead Heath and came in close contact with Rothenstein and through him came in contact with Yeats, Mansfield, Earnest Rhys, Miss Sinclair, Evelyn Underhill, Trevelyan, Fox Strangways and Ezra Pound, and also with Nevinson, the editor of the liberal journal *National*. He became deeply impressed with the luminous aspects of the English life and realised how the life of the English Society was gradually growing and deepening in thought whereas in India we cling only to the past as if the law of natural evolution had been suspended there.

He not only had given a manuscript copy of his song-offerings in dedication to Rothenstein but he had also given it to the poet Yeats. Yeats in the preface to the *Song-Offerings* refers to his impressions on reading this manuscript in the following terms.—“I have carried the MS. of these translations about with me for days reading it in railway-trains or on the top of omnibuses and in restaurants and I have often had to close it lest some stranger would see how much it moved me.” Under the auspices of the union of East and West, a Society formed by Kedarnath Das Gupta, a reception was arranged for the poet at the Trocadero Hotel on the 10th July 1912. There the poet was introduced by Yeats, the president of the reception. Yeats, in introducing him, said that he could not think of any contemporary composition in English that can be compared with the *Song-Offerings*. It could be compared with Kempis's Imitation of Christ but the ring of the *Song-Offerings* was superior even to that of Kempis's composition as the latter was laden with a sense of guilt and sin and the former

overflows with the milk of love for God. After this he received invitations from various literary men and became closely acquainted with the literary circles in London. Every day he had "new friends and new appreciations" from strangers. It was at this time that he was acquainted with Rev. C. F. Andrews. He was a Professor of the St. Stephen's College, Delhi. He spent some time also in the villages of England such as Batterton and Chalford and tried to get acquainted with the village life and the educational system of the country. Rabindranath had in the meanwhile made a number of typed copies of the *Gītāñjali* and had presented them to some of the most distinguished literary men. Rothenstein was prepared to write an introduction and it was decided that it should be published by the India Society. In the meanwhile Rabindranath left for America. He had become too fatigued with meeting people and discussing with them about his own book. He had made many friends in England such as Stafford Brooke, Wells, Dickinson, Bertrand Russell and others. In addition to his *Song-Offerings* he had also prepared translations of his other poems under the name of *Gardener* which was published in 1913, one year after the publication of the *Song-Offerings*. At this time a translation of *Dāk-ghar* was made by Mr. Debabrata Mukherjee under the name of *Post-Office* and the *Rājā* by the poet himself under the name *The King of the Dark Chamber*. We note from the letters of the time that though he was in a new excitement of literary fame he was always thinking of and pining for the beautiful scenes of India and was anxious about the progress of the boys of his school. He purchased at this time the Surul House from Colonel M. P. Sinha. His idea was that his son Rathindranath would start agricultural laboratories and farms at that place.

He reached New York on the 27th October 1912. From New York he started for Illinois where his son Rathindra and his son-in-law Nagendranath had studied agriculture. He was here invited to deliver lectures at Wisconsin and Iowa and in other clubs and he prepared four articles in English for the purpose. In the meanwhile the publication of the *Song-Offerings* created a great stir of praise in the news-papers and it was remarked in the *Times* and elsewhere that the publication of the *Song-Offerings* was the greatest literary event of the year. He was flooded with letters of appreciation. He delivered a lecture in Chicago on the ideals of the ancient civilization of India and also in the Unitarian Hall on the problem of evil. From Chicago he went to Rochester, New Hampshire, and met Prof. Eucken and spoke on race-conflict. From Rochester, he went to Boston and met Prof. Woods there. In Boston, he delivered a number of lectures. In the beginning of the next year he returned to England. It may not be out of place here to mention that his purchase of

the Surul House was a bad bargain. He tried to raise money by making a selection of his prose writings called *Pāṭha-saṅcaya*, but the Calcutta University did not accept it as a text-book. From his appreciations in America he sometimes thought that he could possibly make some money there but he was disappointed in this hope. Moreover, while he was receiving appreciations in Europe, the attitude of his countrymen towards him had been far from congenial. Bepin Chandra Pal, one of the most powerful writers of the time, was directing his criticism against Rabindranath on the ground that Rabindranath's writings were devoid of all realism. He was a rich Zemindar and his aristocratic tendencies could not allow him to enter into any deep sympathy with the common folk. He had no right to speak any thing about religion. He did not accept the *Śāstras* nor did he take any initiation from a Guru and depended entirely on his inner enlightenment which was all smoky and unreal.

After spending a month and a half, in June 1913, he delivered lectures at the Caxton Hall. These lectures were more or less the same as those he delivered at Chicago and Harvard (Boston). These were later on published in a book called *Sādhanā*. The subjects dealt with in these lectures are as follows: the Relation of the individual to the Universe, Soul-consciousness, the Problem of Evil, the Problem of Self, Realisation in Love, Realisation in Action, Realisation in Beauty, Realisation of the Infinite. Through these lectures he wanted to present before the English public all that was best in Indian culture. At this time, Andrews had delivered a lecture in Simla on Rabindranath Tagore at which Lord and Lady Hardings were present. Rabindranath on hearing of this lecture felt very embarrassed and wrote in a letter, "I had spoken something about my inner life to Andrews but I do not remember that there was any thing of egotism there. I shall never forget the poverty in my inner life. In whatsoever way I may try to look at me I see that though there have been blossoms in abundance, there has been no fruit. My creative efforts have stopped in the plane of poetry but it has not penetrated into the silent luminous plane. For this reason I have nothing to take pride in the creative efforts of my Life."

Shortly after this Rabindranath entered into the Duchess Nursing Home for an operation of his piles, the Homoeopathic treatment being of no avail. In the meanwhile, the financial condition of the Santiniketan School became very embarrassing. But at this time, Pearson, a Cambridge Graduate, working in the London Missionary College, joined Rabindranath's School and decided to devote his life to the work of the School. Andrews was also staying at Santiniketan at this time. Rabindranath was spending his time composing songs. Rabindranath started for India on

the 4th September 1913 while Rathindranath and his wife started out for a Continental tour. In the meanwhile he had arranged for the publication of the *Crescent Moon* being a collection of poems from *Śiśu*, and the *King of the Dark Chamber*. These translations published by Macmillan (though after some hesitation at the request of Rothenstein) were all exhausted in course of a year.

Rabindranath returned to India on the 6th October 1913. On the 15th November, the English newspaper *Empire* published a news of the award of the Nobel Prize of the value of £8,000 to him. Newspapers of India and abroad expressed their wonder at this recognition of his great talents by a foreign body like the Swedish Academy. Many well-known persons of Calcutta such as Justice A. Chaudhuri, Sir J. C. Bose, Dr. Pran Krishna Acharyya, Rev. Millburn, Maulvi Abdul Kasem, Satish Chandra Vidyabhushan, Puran Chand Nahar and others went to greet him, but what the poet said in reply was hardly palatable. He told them that he had always been badly treated by his countrymen and now if on the occasion of recognition that he had received from a foreign land his countrymen had rushed forward to greet him, he could hardly treat it as genuine. He was therefore unable to drink the cup of praise that had been offered to him but he could only touch it with his lips. Such a reply produced a wave of dissatisfaction. We have seen elsewhere that Rabindranath had in a letter written that he only had visions from the poetic plane but he could not enter into the silent luminous plane. Such occasions show the truth of his remark. He was extremely sensitive and could suddenly be roused to anger that burned within him at every opposition or criticism. Such anger often burst out immediately and sometimes kept on smoking in his heart and came out suddenly when there was little occasion for it. He had in his country received appreciations and criticisms alike and was getting angry with his country that it was not appreciating him sufficiently well. When therefore he received the blue ribbon of literary order from Sweden all his pent-up fury burst forth and he told the people who had come to honour him that as this honour was induced by the honour that was accorded to him by Sweden it had no worth and he could not accept it as genuine. If he had considered the case more judiciously he could have easily seen that even if his people were unable to appreciate him, they had the goodness of being friendly to him on the occasion of the honour that he had received from Sweden and we should have expected him to say that of all the honours that he had received he regarded the honour accorded to him by countrymen as nearest to his heart. We could say that this was really his feelings had not the expression of it being refracted out of its way by his repressed dissatisfaction.

In the meanwhile, Ramsay Macdonald had visited Bolepur. Pearson and Andrews had joined Santiniketan and Rabindranath was trying to attain a clear-cut religious policy for the Bolepur Āśrama. So long the School was observing caste-system. Brahmins and other castes sat in different rows at the time of meals but at this time a Mahommeden student came and Andrews and Pearson had also joined the school. How was the school to receive them? Rabindranath said,—“This is a hermitage. There are no parties or sects here. We cannot attain truth through any sectarian means. We break open prison-walls in the name of truth, give it a new name and wall it up again and begin to worship it. No one shall go out of this hermitage with any name. The initiation of religion that we shall get here will be the initiation of humanity. Here we shall save ourselves from the worship of sectarian names. The hermitage is for that. From whatever country, from whatsoever society, whosoever may come, he will shed lustre with his life of virtue and with that we shall invite all to the field of liberation. Any one from any distant country observing any faith may seek our protection. May we not feel any hesitation in receiving them in our fold. May not our mind be narrow with the recorded beliefs of any sectarian faith.” This year there was a quarrel between the older and the newer section of the Brahmo Samaj on the question of allowing Rabindranath to give a sermon on the *Māghotsava* Day. The elder section were too averse to admitting Rabindranath as a member of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj, but they were defeated by the votes of the Younger people. In 1916, he was awarded a diploma and a medal for the Nobel Prize by Lord Carmichael. In 1913, Gandhi had started agitation in South Africa. Andrews and Pearson started for South Africa to witness the nature of the agitation. The Surul House was renovated and it became the centre of village-reconstruction. A drama, *Acalāyatana*, was now played in Santiniketan, Rabindranath was now more than at any time keenly alive with the spirit of that liberal culture which would not delimit itself by any geographical, racial, religious, political or social bonds. He was somewhat intoxicated with a religious fervour and a sense of humanity beyond all kinds of patriotism and nationalism. The fact of his getting the Nobel Prize and the fact that Pearson and Andrews had joined the Santiniketan were probably the reasons which excited his mind to this direction. He was a man of strong emotions and the shock of this great honour made him helpless and he took refuge in his inner self as he often did under such circumstances.

In 1914, Babu Pramathanath Chaudhuri started a new monthly journal called the *Sabuj-patra*. The *Sabuj-patra* was the journal of the modern camp and it was contended that it should usher in the new

thoughts of the country, wake new leaves, grow and shake off the old and yellow ones to make room for the new. Rabindranath had now started to write stories in the *Sabuj-patra* and was writing the poems which were collected together in the collection called *Balākā*. In a letter to Andrews at this time, he says, "I won't let you work during the vacation. We must have no particular plans for our holidays. Let us agree to waste them utterly until laziness proves to be a burden to us. The cultivation of usefulness produces an enormous amount of failure simply because in our avidity we sow seeds too closely. There is some truth in this statement. Artistic works and poetry particularly can grow only when the mind is in a holiday mood of contemplative pleasure.

He was spending his holidays in Ramgarh and was for a time overcome with a pensive shadow indicating some spiritual struggle the nature of which was neither clear nor distinct. But he soon got over this attitude of mind and was enjoying good health. In the meanwhile, an Arabic poet called Bustani came from Syria to Santiniketan. He had translated some of the poems from *Gītāñjali*, *Gardener*, *Crescent Moon* and *Citrā* into Arabic poetry. At this time, in a story published in the *Sabuj-patra*, Rabindranath expressed the view that a woman had also a sphere of activity transcending her limited range in the domestic circle. A woman was after all a human being and has her ideals to fulfil, the ideals that she cannot or may not realise within her narrow domestic circle of duties. It may be remembered that Bepin Chandra Pal, one of the most powerful writers of the day, had started criticising Rabindranath. Now with the publication of the *Sabuj-patra*, Bepin Chandra Pal began to give vent to his feelings of patriotism which had made an inrush into literature and was trying to interpret the sympathy with Hindu institutions in a purely Hindu manner. This was practically what he called Realism. To the complaint that Rabindranath's literary contributions had no foundation in reality, Rabindranath replied that it was aesthetic emotion that formed the reality of Art and not the evanescent things. Things are transient but the standard and constitution of aesthetic emotion are eternal. It was also wrong to think that Hinduism should be the pattern by which we should judge literature. The question also arose as to whether utility or public good be regarded as the object of literature. Rabindranath in replying to it said in an article called *Lokahita* that when people become too much anxious for doing good there is often intoxication of vanity that they were superior to others who did not move about with the slogan of doing good to others. There is only one right by which one can do good to others and this right is the right of affection. Any effort to do good without affection is insulting to humanity. In the time of the *Svadesi* agitation

the Moslems did not join with the Hindus because the Moslems were never treated with friendliness by the Hindus. So at the time of partition the show of friendship demonstrated in order to attract them was in a way insulting to the Moslems. In Europe the tyranny of the rich has forced the poor to acquire strength by union. They, therefore, do not offer prayers to the rich or to the Government but they set forth their demands. Our gentry is in the quietness of indifference. They do not know their own folk. They have to know them from books written in English. If we make a literature which is directly intended for the folk it would not be literature. Literature can grow only through joy but not through kindness. A common folk in our country had lost all strength and are always dependent upon the kindness of others. There is nothing more dehumanising than the spirit that seeks mercy and kindness everywhere. If we wish to raise them we have to give them facilities for uniting by which means alone they can gain power and feel conscious of it. But all this may be regarded as proceeding from one fundamental principle running through his creative functions and that of his philosophy viz., the idea of self-expression. We can do good to others only by offering them facilities for self-expression. True humanity does not lie so much in kindness and genuine sympathy but in being able to look upon them as ourselves, as free men, as being able to express themselves with self-respect and dignity and not to be depended on us for charity. Charity demeans humanity. Thus he says in an article written at this time—"I shall express myself every moment in all my movements and conversation but I cannot reveal myself fully at my efforts at self-expression. I am many times more beyond the range of my self-expression as I am within it. At one end there is the finite, at another end there is the infinite. My unmanifested self becomes true in relation to my manifested self." We see here that the self-expression of an eternally unexpressed creative reality is the end of our existence. This should therefore be our guide in our social relations with the people. Whenever we may think of doing good to our fellow men from a superior platform we give expression to that which we are not, to egotism and vanity and not to our real self. Our true spirit should be to raise our people to our own status, to make them conscious of their own power and strength, to fight with us for their rights and not to beg at our doors with folded hands. Man cannot express himself in his indignity and poverty and in a spirit of beggary. Self-respect is the birthright of every human being. Any good that we may try to do them that hunts this spirit is but a manifestation of our own vanity.

It was 1914. The war has begun. The poet was at this time

composing lyrical songs which were included in *Gītāli* and *Balākā*. Prof. Ramendra Sundar Trivedi was about three years junior to Rabindranath. We remember that a great ovation was given to Rabindranath at the Town Hall on his fiftieth birthday. A similar occasion came when Prof. Ramendra Sundar Trivedi attained his fiftieth year and he was greeted by Rabindranath. It is pertinent to remember on this occasion that the religious and social views of Ramendra Sundar and Rabindranath differed widely. Rabindranath was at this time trying to live more an inward life than an outward one. Thus he writes to a friend at this time—"Teaching I must give up and also trying to take up the role of a beneficent angel to others. I am praying to be lighted from within and not simply to hold a light in my hand."

In September 1914, Rabindranath was travelling. He went first to Bodhgaya, and then to Allahabad and on returning from there, went to Darjeeling and then again returned to Calcutta. At this time, he had finished writing 4 stories, the collection of which pass by the name of *Caturaṅga* (1914) which was later on translated into English under the name *Broken Ties* and in French under the name *Quatre Voix*. Rabindranath was now at Agra when Mahatma Gandhi had proceeded to England from Transvaal as he had decided to return to India from England and to live in India permanently. He dissolved his school (The Phoenix School) at Transvaal. The boys and teachers of this school, about 20 in number, stayed for some time at Gurukul, Hardwar and then migrated to Santiniketan and after some time Mahatma Gandhi also had come to Santiniketan. The poet came from Agra to Allahabad and was now writing some of the best poems of *Balākā*, e.g., the *Cañcalā*. A letter written by him at this time and quoted in Mr. Prabhat Mukherjee's biography depicts an obscure side of his temperament. Thus he says—"You must have recognised by this time that I have something elusive in me which eludes myself not less than others. Because of this element in my nature, I have to keep my environment free and open, fully to make room in my life for the undreamt-of who is expected every moment. Believe me, I have strong human sympathy, yet I can never enter into such relations with others as may impede the current of my life, which flows from the darkness of solitude beyond my ken. I can love but I have not that which is termed adhesiveness; or to be more accurate. I have a force acting in me, jealous of all attachment, a force that ever tries to win me for itself for its own hidden purpose."

He returned to Bolepur in the December of 1914 and we find him speaking there against the ravages of Nationalism. It may be remembered that the great European War had broken out. Shortly after this, he went

to Shilaidaha and felt that the turmoils of his life had much subsided. Rabindranath had now returned to Bolepur and was writing *Phālgunī* (1915). At this time, Lord Carmichael visited the Bolepur School. In April 1915 the *Phālgunī* drama was enacted in Bolepur in which Rabindranath appeared in the role of *Andha Bāul* at the age of fifty-four.

In 1915, on the birth day of the King Emperor George V, Rabindranath was awarded a Knighthood. Rabindranath was spending his time at the Santiniketan and was arranging for the collection of an edition of Valmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa* through Ramesh Chandra Kavyatirtha. He was at this time spending anxious time because of the fall in the number of students and of the necessary financial embarrassments. He was feeling within himself the urge of a new inspiration. He was feeling the weight of the school too much on him but he had no way of relieving himself from the burden. He was also feeling that inspite of his best efforts the Santiniketan School was not actually taking the forms that he really intended it to do. It is interesting to note that Rabindranath was against imposing all forms of rigidity of discipline in his school. He wanted in his mind that the school should evolve itself in particular lines, but he would not impose any regulations to that purpose. Here his policy was entirely different from that of Mahatma Gandhi. He writes at this time in a letter—"I do not believe in lecturing or in compelling fellow-workers by coercion; for all free ideas must work themselves out from freedom. Only a moral tyrant can think that he has the dreadful power to make his thought prevail by means of subjection. There are men who make idols of their ideas and sacrifice humanity before their altars. But in my worship of the idea, I am not a worshipper of the Kali". He was feeling that his co-workers were laying more stress on form rather than on the idea and he felt that at such a juncture he should better go away and give his idea a new birth or create possibilities for it. Here again we find the old philosophy working within him. The creative idea of every person was responsible for its own creations. So in teaching also it would be wrong to force the students to grow in any particular pattern. For this reason he decried all ideas of imposing rigidity of discipline and direction to his students. The fallacy of his position seems to be the fact that certain habits of drudgery and active work must be generated in the students. The spirit is often meeker than the flesh and the flesh ought to be trained by mechanical methods in such a manner that it may respond to the message of the spirit. But Rabindranath was a thorough idealist in this matter. By the pressure of his co-workers he had to affiliate his school with the Calcutta University, the ideals of which latter were quite different from those of his school. He was feeling very unhappy. He was getting sick of his profession as a teacher.

As he writes in a letter—"I am afraid that my life at the Āśrama was at last making me a teacher which is unsatisfactory for me because it is unnatural". Though troubled in mind, he was arranging the acting of the *Śārodotsava* in the school and was lecturing at the Rammohan Anniversary in Calcutta. At this time he went to Kashmir and after staying there for sometime, where he was a guest of the Kashmir Government, he returned to Santiniketan. In the meanwhile, his novel, *Ghare-Bāire* was being published serially in the *Sabuj-patra*. He was also delivering lectures on education (*Śikṣār Bāhana*) which contained more or less the same stuff which he had said 25 years ago in his article *Śikṣār Herpher*. In the meanwhile, *Phālgunī* was enacted in Calcutta for the relief of famine in Bankura. Rabindranath himself appeared on the stage. This work was translated into English under the name *The Cycle of Spring* in 1917. In the meanwhile *Ghare-Bāire* was published. It was later on translated into English as *The Home and the World*. The work *Ghare-Bāire* was translated into various languages, but in his own country he had many rude criticisms to bear. At this time there occurred the memorable Oaten-incident in the Presidency College when Mr. Oaten, a teacher of History in the Presidency College had used certain insulting expressions and was in consequence beaten by the students. Rabindranath who had been a teacher all his life wrote an article defending the action of the boys in such a situation. At the same time we note that the poet was unhappy in his mind and was roaming from place to place without getting any satisfaction of mind. In May 1916, he started for Japan with Pearson, Andrews and Mukul Dey. On the way he was given a great reception in Rangoon. Passing by Singapore he reached Kobe. This was his first visit to Japan. But Rabindranath's reputation had already spread to Japan. He made many acquaintances in Japan and was very warmly received there. He wrote two articles there, *Message of India to Japan* and *the spirit of Japan* and he read them before the Tokyo University and the Kais Gizuku University. In these two articles he had criticised the nationalistic spirit of Japan which wanted to bring China under subjection. After these two articles he received no further invitation of giving lectures and the affection of the people of Japan immediately became cold. He left for America from Japan with but little greetings from the Japanese people. He received an invitation from Canada but he refused the invitation on the ground that until the Immigration Law was withdrawn he could not expect that he would receive good treatment there. While in Japan he and Pearson became acquainted with Paul Richard. This person appeared so religious to Pearson that he accepted him almost as his *Guru*. The 'Mother' of Sri Aurobinda's Asrama is the discarded wife of this Paul Richard.

He had arranged with the firm of Paul Lyceum and entered into a contract with him that all his lectures in America should be under the organisation of this firm and that Rabindranath would receive only a certain percentage of the money received. He arrived in Seattle on the 18th September 1916. His first reception was at the Sunset Club (an organised women's club). His first lecture was at the Sunset Club under the organisation of Paul Lyceum and the subject was the cult of rationalisation. When he had started from India he had thought of speaking on other subjects. But in witnessing the nationalism of Japan his mind had revolted. He had been to America 3 years before but the tone of his present speech was entirely different.

Under the contractual arrangement of Paul Lyceum the poet had delivered lectures from one end of America to the other. He sometimes gave readings of his poems but most of his lectures were on the subject of the evils of rationalism. The subject was not probably well-chosen for a country like America especially at the time when War was going on.

This is true that his lectures had struck a new note and had awakened new lines of thought in the minds of many but it can not be denied that there was a great wave of dissatisfaction amongst many. He had criticised the Americans on their accumulation of wealth and their intense practicality which had largely obscured their minds to true vision. The criticisms that were directed against him centered on the point that though his speeches may be good to hear yet they had no practical value. India had gained nothing by it and if the Americans followed it that would be disastrous. It was also remarked that though he decried wealth in his speeches yet he had himself come to America to collect a portion of what America had amassed. There was a section of Indian people who were supposed to be connected with revolutionary schemes and for arranging ways and means by which help from America may be secured in the interest of the Indians. These people strongly criticised his acceptance of the Knighthood which they regarded as tantamount to selling his birth-right to the British. They further remarked that thus bought by the English he had come to America for making a propaganda in favour of British administration in India. At one time it was suspected by the American police that these members of the Gadar Community had intentions of laying violent hands. We do not know that in the end the poet became so fatigued that he had to terminate the contract before due time, thus making these liable to heavy compensation. We do not know how much money he collected for his school from America but we can well imagine how he must have felt the fatigue of these lectures through one end of America to the other. When he had come on a previous occasion

he had not sought to collect any money from America but this time he came with the definite purpose of collecting money for Santiniketan. His excuse was that as his institution stood for the cosmopolitan and universal culture of the world he had the right to seek the help of every country and particularly of America which stood for cosmopolitan culture. From America the poet passed on to Honolulu where he delivered a lecture and from there to Japan back to India. Pearson remained in Japan and he had to return home only with Mukul Chandra Dey, the artist.

Rabindranath returned to India in March 1917. In the meanwhile a school called *Bicitrā* was opened in his Jorasanko house for training young men and women particularly in painting. The late Babu Ajit K. Chakravarty, Nandalal Bose, Ashit K. Halder and Mukul Ch. Dey were associated with it as teachers. Rabindranath on his return, was delighted to see the school working and became the centre of attraction of this school. The *Sabuj-patra* journal was flourishing nicely and had entered into the controversy of the desirability of using spoken language for literary purposes. Mr. Promotha Chowdhury was the Chief Lieutenant of this campaign. It had the whole-hearted support of Rabindranath. At this time (1917), Rabindranath was engaged in writing stories such as *Tapasvinī* and *Paylā Nāmbār*. After some time, he again went to Silaidaha for refreshing his nerves. In this year, special reception was given to Rabindranath by the Brahmo Samaj under the Presidency of Mr. Brojendra Nath Seal.

Rabindranath has suffered much in Japan and America for his strictures against nationalism. He suffered no less for entertaining such views in his own country. We know that since the Surat Congress of 1907, the country was sharply divided within two sets of politicians, moderates and extremists. In 1916, all parties assembled in Lucknow, the Congress and the Moslem League joined together to present a scheme for effectuation after the War. Mrs. Besant and Tilak, had also started agitation for Home Rule. In the meanwhile, in June 1917, Mrs. Besant, and two of her comrades were interned by Government. At this junction Rabindranath came out with a protest declaration in his article *Kartār Icchāya Karma*. He said in this article, that the right of executing things and to correct oneself through errors, is the birth-right of man. He further said that true religion should teach man to respect his fellow beings. But the sectarian religion of rituals and rites would encourage all kinds of human tyranny. The freedom that we demand in politics should also be demanded in social and religious affairs. He further said, that our real hindrance was the burden of our past. We must relieve ourselves of this burden and go forward. In the same month, he wrote an

article in the *Sabuj-patra* on the freedom of music. He tried to prove there that music was a vehicle of self-expression and it should not therefore be chained down by rigorous rules and the same principle should be applicable in the field of art.

In the meanwhile the Morley-Montague Scheme was declared to the effect that Home Rule should be granted in successive stages. This pleased the moderates, but the extremists rejected it. At this time, Bengal was seething in agitation and many of the young boys of the country were interned. It was proposed that in the next Congress, Mrs. Besant should be the President and Rabindranath should be the Chairman of the Reception Committee. But Rabindranath waived his claims in favour of Rai Bahadur Baikunthanath Sen. But during all this time the activities of the *Bicitrā* club were going on in full swing and the *Post-office* was staged. Rabindranath was also at this time delivering lectures before various societies.

At this time, Mrs. Besant was trying to establish National University in collusion with the National Council of Education of Calcutta. But all these collapsed. At this time, the Sadler Commission was appointed for suggesting reforms in the Calcutta University. The Sadler Commission summarised Rabindranath's views of education in the following term:

It is Sir Rabindranath's conviction that while English should be skilfully and thoroughly taught as a second language chief medium of instruction in school (and even in Colleges upto the stage of the University degree) should be the mother tongue.

".....he holds that the essential things in the culture of the West should be conveyed to the whole Bengalee people by means of a widely diffused education, but this can only be done by the wider use of a vernacular in the schools. Education should aim at developing characteristic gifts of the people, especially its love of recited poetry and of the spoken tale; its talent for music, its (too neglected) aptitude for expression through the work of the hand, its power of imagination, its quickness of emotional response. At the sametime, education should endeavour to correct the defects of the national temperament, to supply what is wanting in it; to fortify what is weak, and not less to give training in the habit of steady co-operation with others; in the alert use of opportunities for social betterment, in the practice of method of organisation for the collective good. For these reasons, in his own school at Bolepur, he gives the central place to studies which can best be pursued in the mother tongue; makes full educational use of music and of dramatic representations; of imagination in narrative and of manual work; of social service among less fortunate neighbours and of responsible self-government in the life of the

school community itself. For the achievement of these aims he feels that there is strong need for British influence in Indian education. And he speaks with gratitude of the help which he has had from English teachers in his own school, but he would refuse such help at all costs as being educationally harmful, where lack of sympathy prevents a true human relation, between the English teachers and his Bengali pupils."

In the meanwhile, he had rewritten his drama *Acālāyatan* under the name *Guru* and had it staged in Santiniketan.

By this time the poet was feeling fatigued in the country and his literary activities had also temporarily come to an ebb and he was thinking of making a journey to Australia. But all on a sudden information came through Andrews that Government had information that the journey the poet had made from Japan to America, was at the instigation of Germany and the poet was involved in the conspiracy of the revolutionary party in America. Rabindranath wrote an angry protest against it to President Wilson and sent the copy of it to the Viceroy of India.

In the meanwhile, Pearson was imprisoned in Pekin and his book on political conditions of India published from Japan was proscribed. His daughter Bela Devi died at this time. But in the evening the poet was found conversing in the usual manner in *Bicitrā*. He translated at this time the dramas *Mukuta* and *Sāradsav*.

He was at this time staying in Santiniketan teaching the boys, writing sundry things. Many of the poems written at this time was included in his *Gītālī* and *Gīta-pañcāśikā*. While in America he received a present of small printing press and treadle machine from the inhabitant of the town of Lincoln. This was the beginning of the Santiniketan Press. We find that he was writing further songs which were published in *Gītā-bīthikā*. At this time, he found the conception of enlarging his school into a World University of Visvabharati in which people from all parts of India might come and receive education of a Universal type which would be the true national education. The different colonies of boys from different provinces of India might keep to their old peculiar customs and manners where they did not conflict with our national ideas and they would thus get a training from their childhood to respect each other inspite of outward differences. In the meanwhile, the poet, had started for Madras but had to give up the idea and get down at Pithapuram on account of train difficulties. He returned to Calcutta after a time. Influenza was raising at this time and one of his best pupils Ajit K. Chakraverty died. Visvabharati as an institution was now formally started on the 22nd December 1918. A thousand of rupees was received as donation from a number of Gujrateres. Soon after this the poet undertook a journey in

South India. He received invitations from Bangalore dramatic association. From Bangalore to Mysore, Salem, Kumbakonam, Tanjore, Madura, Trichinopoly he lectured in various places on *Tapoban*, or the message of the forest. He had hoped that he would get something substantial from the Mysore State for his Visva-bharati; but he was disappointed in this. Coming to Madras, he delivered three lectures there, on Education, Message of the forest and the spirit of popular Religion in India. He returned to Calcutta and delivered lectures on Education at the Empire Theatre. Admission was restricted by tickets. After a week, he read out his lecture on the message of the forest in the Bose Institute. In these lectures, he tried to formulate his ideals of a true University Visva-Bharati. He pointed out that the objects of our Universities should not be merely to create men for certain prescribed professions; but to keep our alumni in closed contact the productive economic activities of our village life. Our educated men have no roots on the ground; they are like parasitic plants hanging on branches of trees. A University must know how to make practical application on Economics, Politics, Agriculture, Physiology and Hygiene. Such a University should do its best to encourage the cultivation of the strands of cultural history of India and professors should be engaged in advancing the bounds of knowledge. Teaching is of secondary importance. At this time he was writing a new type of literature in prose and verse first called *Kathikā* and then *Lipikā*. He had also written a drama called *Svargamartya*.

At this time, political affairs in India were taking a new turn. The Rowlat Committee was appointed for devising ways and means for the suppression of revolutionary activities. Mahatma Gandhi had warned the Government (1919), that he would start *Satyāgraha* movement if the Rowlat Bill was turned into an Act. The poet was writing at this time Letters called the *Bātāyaniker Patra* in which he was discussing diverse problems at random. In the meanwhile, he came to know of the Jallinwala Bagh tragedy in the Punjab. The news was suppressed in the news papers under the Martial Law. For some days he was burning within himself in regret and shame and ultimately he wrote a letter to Lord Chemsford resigning his Knighthood and at the same time published the letter in the papers. He wrote as follows:—

"The enormity of the measures taken by the Government in the Punjab for quelling some local disturbances has, with a rude shock, revealed to our minds the helplessness of our position as British Subjects in India. The disproportionate severity of punishments inflicted upon the unfortunate people and the methods of carrying them out, we are convinced, are without parallel in the history of civilised governments, barring some

conspicuous exceptions, recent and remote. Considering that such treatment has been meted out to a population disarmed and resourceless, by a power which has the most terribly efficient organisation for destruction of human life, we must strongly assert that it can claim no political expediency far less moral justification. The accounts of insults and sufferings undergone by our brothers in the Punjab have trickled through the gagged silence reaching every corner of India and the Universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people has been ignored by our rulers—possibly congratulating themselves for imparting what they imagine as salutary lessons. This callousness has been praised by most of the Anglo-Indian papers, which have in some cases gone to the brutal length of making a fun of our sufferings, without receiving the least check from the same authority, relentlessly careful in its smothering every cry of pain and expression of judgment from the organs representing the sufferers. Knowing that our appeals have been in vain and that the passion of vengeance is blinding the noble vision of Statesmanship in our Government, which could so easily afford to be magnanimous as befitting its physical strength and moral tradition, the very least that I can do for my country is to take all consequences upon myself in giving voice to the protest of millions of my countrymen, surprised into a dumb anguish of terror. The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation, and I, for my part wish to stand shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of my countrymen, who, for their so called insignificance are liable to suffer a degradation not fit for human beings and these are the reasons which have painfully compelled me to ask Your Excellency with due deference and regret to relieve me of my title of Knighthood which I had the honour to accept from His Majesty the King at the hands of Your Predecessor for whose nobleness of heart I still entertain great admiration."

The publication of this letter was followed by various types of criticisms and appreciations from various quarters and I can on my own account say and I had heard also the poet to say that this action of his had alienated many of his English friends, who could not bear with equanimity any insult directed to the King.

Here also we find our old Rabindranath—sensitive to the extreme and rushing into any rashness by the impulsion of his emotions at the moment. We know that he loved his countrymen; love and sympathy to his own people was the watchword of his life. He was also in favour of taking individual action of reparation whenever one may be personally insulted. The tyranny of Jallianwalabagh, the brand of shame on the forehead of our governing people, was felt by him as a personal assault,

The only means of reparation that suggested itself to him was to refuse the honour that was given him by the King-Emperor. While we must all appreciate the keen sense of personal sympathy with the people that dictated him to such a course we cannot think that he would not have done such an action if he had time to think over it. It was a rash action of the moment. He had himself distinguished between great Englishmen and Small Englishmen. And if the small Englishmen had done a barbaric act, was that a sufficient reason to give a challenge to the King-Emperor who stands as the representative of bad and good Englishmen alike, and after he had owed so much to the friendship of good Englishmen? But Rabindranath was anxious for self-expression. He had felt the insult as a personal assault. He must do something to give vent to his anger in a dignified manner without casting abuse and vituperation at the assailant. It was a sort of non-violent Non-Co-operation.

The poet now turned towards giving shape and form to his Visva-bharati. Andrews was teaching English literature. The poet himself was teaching Browning. Mahasthavira Dharmadhara Rajaguru was teaching Bhuddhist Philosophy. Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya was teaching Sanskrit and Pali ; Kapileswar Misra, Sanskrit Grammar ; Kshitimohan Sen, Religion of the Middle Ages in Hindi Literature and Rabindranath Genetics. The poet was feeling that though we were actually seeking some new ideals to mould our educational system and though one after another the Universities were being started, yet they were all falling in the old net and manufacturing a stereotyped form of education. The poet wanted that he would do something new. We remember that the Bolepur School was established as a means to his giving shape and form to his idea of education and how it should be imparted. He believed that spontaneity of self-expression was the ideal of education and that such spontaneity may naturally evolve when young minds are in close touch with Nature, if too much of rigour and discipline do not hamper their growth. This was now supplemented by the new ideal of enlarging education at a higher stage by offering facilities not only for the cultivation of Indian culture at its best but also by assimilating all that is best in European culture. In this way the Sectarian and provincial aspects of education will be removed and the true self-expression of the people will find a spontaneous channel of flow. We know that Rabindranath had always fought against narrow bigotry and sectarianism which had raised walls within walls, dams after dams, and thus had often transformed the freely flowing Ganges into little ponds and thereby had obscured the true vision of culture. All that was opposed to self-expression and spontaneous flow of creative energy was to him a sin and in and through the Santiniketan School and the

Visvabharati he wanted to give visible form and shape to his spiritual and aesthetic ideals—not only through education but through music, painting, acting, social service and the like. He wanted thereby to open all the different aspects of education before the alumni of the school. For this reason also he was averse to imparting education through English. The English language being foreign to us always puts obstacles in the way of our assimilation and expression.

But intellectuality was not the only way of self-expression. There is a way of education through the proper expression of our emotions. Such a training of our emotions can only be through painting, music, and dancing. Self-expression must be an expression of the complete self in thought, emotion and action, knowing, feeling and willing. For this purpose he started the Kalā-Bhavan. There were Dinendranath Tagore, Bhimrao Shastri, Nakuleswar Gossain, brother of Radhika Gossain of Bishnupur for music. Two teachers were brought from Tipperah for teaching Manipuri dances and there were Surendranath Kar and Nandalal Basu for painting. In the meanwhile the poet had once been to Sylhet and later on started for Gujrat. He had in this year rewritten *Rājā* as *Arūp-ratan* and there were the stories of *Kathikā* going on. He was also teaching the boys and playing with young children. He went first to Sabarmati and then to Ahmedabad and later on to Bhavnagar and then he went to Nadiad, lecturing in most of the places. Later on he started for Bombay and from there he went to Baroda and then returned to Calcutta. He had a natural restlessness in him and could never rest in one place for long. After his tour in Gujrat, he started for Europe on 11th May, 1920. On the boat he was translating pieces of Santiniketan Sermon and they were later on published under the name *Thought-relics*. He was also revising the translations of his *Chinna-patra* which were later on published under the name *Glimpses of Bengal*. He was himself, however, uncertain in his mind as to why he was going to Europe. In one of his writings he reviewed his mental position and confessed the uncertainty of his mind but suggested that probably at the back of his mind there was a desire to meet the best souls of Europe. He met many of his old friends in England and had a fury of social engagements but he noticed that they were no longer as warm to him as they were before. He went to Oxford and delivered a lecture on the *Message of the Forest* before the students. It was arranged that the Poet-laureate Robert Bridges would preside, but he did not turn up and the social atmosphere was quite cold. Under the auspices of the Society of the East and the West of Kedarnath Das Gupta, a reception was arranged for Rabindranath at the Caxton Hall. The next day a lecture was arranged at the Y.M.C.A. on the centre of Indian Culture. In the meanwhile the

poet had occasion to meet some of the distinguished Indians as Lord Sinha, Sir K. G. Gupta as well as some distinguished English politicians including Montague himself. The center of the conversation was the Jallianwala-bagh incident but the political atmosphere of England was such that he discovered to his regret that the British Government was not prepared to do anything in the matter. His attempts at negotiations with Montague and others were not however kindly interpreted in India.

From England he went to Paris and was there the guest of a rich Parisian M. Makh. Here he met for a short time H. Bergson and a few other distinguished Parisians. But his book on Nationalism was not liked by the Frenchmen and the French Government as well as the great luminaries of France gave a cold response to Tagore's arrival. But in the meanwhile he had an invitation from Holland where he was given a very enthusiastic and inspiring reception by the people of Holland. While in Holland he wrote a letter to the firm of Pond if he could make lecture arrangements for him in America, but he was told that the American people were not kindly disposed towards him and were not prepared to give him a kind reception. He could therefore expect no liberal lecture-engagements in America. From Holland the poet went to Brussels and spoke in the Palace of Justice and from there he returned to England and decided that he must make the Americans understand the value of friendship with India. He must go to the Americans, for they must listen to the appeal of the East. In his mind he was meditating or rather idealising the vision of a union of the world in the Visvabharati and the mission that he has of convincing the world of the fruitfulness of this idea and of making it contribute to the foundation of his International University for the good of humanity. It must be noted that at this time there was a great schism between his own ideal and the ideal of Santiniketan as it was actually expressing itself in India ; for the members of the Santiniketan School and the teachers had joined the Non-co-operation movement of Gandhi. The poet was feeling vexed at this and wrote to Andrews—"Santiniketan is there for giving expression to the eternal man. Santiniketan must treasure in all circumstances that Santi which is at the bosom of the Infinite. Keep Santiniketan away from Politics ; you must not forget that our mission is not political. Where I have my politics I do not belong to Santiniketan. Politics is out of harmony with our Āśrama. This was in 1920. We remember that on the 27th of May, 1919, he had asked the Viceroy to relieve him of his title of Knighthood as a protest against the Government for the tyranny at Jallianwalabagh. Just one year after this he had started for Europe and was negotiating with the prominent politicians of England if England would but admit that Indian Government was wrong in what

they did at Jallianwalabagh, he would not mind if O'dyer was not punished. It is difficult to realise what could lead him to come to England and to hold friendly communications with the prominent politicians of England for at least regretting the Jallianwallabagh incident. He had himself taken a grave step towards non-co-operation by refusing the title awarded to him by His Majesty the King Emperor and yet within a year from this he was speaking very severely against the non-co-operation movement of Mahatma Gandhi. When he felt that he could not impress in the least upon the mind of the ruling classes of the enormity of the guilt of the Jallianwalabagh episode he wrote to Andrews: "It shows that no outrage however monstrous committed against us by the agents of this Government, can arouse feelings of indignation in the hearts of those from whom our Governors are chosen the late events have conclusively proved that our true salvation was in our own hands ; that a nation's greatness can never find its foundation of contemptuous niggardliness." Soon after this in disapproving the non-co-operation movement Rabindranath wrote,—“Let us forget the Punjab affairs but never forget that we shall go on deserving such humiliation over and over again until we set our house in order”. He further writes, “Burning under shame, injustice and insult we are trying to return the same to Europe but in trying to do so we are making ourselves small. May we preserve our self-respect and may we not quarrel and cherish the spirit of revenge and show thereby our smallness. When our final moral test shall show itself naturally in the form of non-co-operation it will indeed be glorious. But if it be another form of beggary it should be given up”. Speaking of Mahatma Gandhi, he writes, “It is criminal to turn moral force into blind force”. Again he writes about Mahatmaji and says, “Let Mahatma Gandhi send his call for positive service, ask for homage in sacrifice which has its end in love and creation. I shall be willing to sit at his feet and do his bidding, if he commands me to co-operate with my countrymen in service of love. I refuse to waste my manhood in lighting the fire of anger and spreading it from house to house.” Later on again he writes, “Santiniketan must be saved from the whirling of dusty politics”. From all these we can safely conclude that his relinquishment of the title of Knighthood was more out of a fit of anger at the moment than out of mature deliberation. He was not his own self three. He could not very well trifle with the friendship of English people as represented in His Majesty the King Emperor. He had therefore realised the situation and hurried to England if he could straighten up the affairs there and win back the heart of the English people, but in this he failed. There is no doubt that he had no want of social calls and some amount of reception but there was no heartiness at their back.

Though he was assured that he had but little chance of collecting money from America for the Visvabharati yet he did not believe it and he again started for America on 28th of October. His purpose was to convince the Americans of the utility of the union of the East and the West and that such unity could be attained by his own School at Santiniketan. The Santiniketan was at first conceived as an ideal institution in which the diverse shades of Indian culture in diverse directions shall find their expression. But now he began to conceive it as an ideal institution for the fusion of international culture in furtherance of international peace. Arriving in New York he did not however criticise Mahatma Gandhi but rather expressed his belief that the movement would succeed. He lectured in New York under the auspices of the League of Political Education on the subject of the Poet's Religion. But no big people took much notice of him and nothing advanced in the direction of the collection of money for Santiniketan. But he was having his social parties and ordinary meetings all right and he writes in a letter at this time,—“Things are working well and I have cause to be sanguine of success”. But he soon discovered that he had but little hope of collecting money from America. America was quite apathetic to preachings of international ideals. He wrote for an interview with the wife of Andrew Carnegie and she refused to see him. He felt the ignominy of coming to a country with begging bowl and wrote, “This visit of mine to America has produced in me an intense contempt of money” (25 December 1920). As a matter of fact this idea of coming to a country for realising money for an institution of his was a sort of beggary and it was against his avowed principles both in politics and social affairs. He believed in the principle of self-help and self-expression and we are bound to say that all his ventures for the collection of money in Europe came out of the promptings of his lower self which made him smaller in his own eyes and also in the eyes of other people and brought him trouble without rendering any adequate contribution towards furthering the activities of his school. He further discovered that his repudiation of knighthood had stiffened the attitude of the best Americans but he was cut to the quick when he learnt that it was said of him that he had come to America for some political purposes under the garb of being a prophet of internationalism, and in a lecture delivered before the Poetry Society he burst forth. The poet had expressed his intention to many people. Mrs. Wilfred Stret had promised to introduce him to the Junior League of Women, a society of rich ladies, but nothing came out of it. Mrs. Jane Adams told him plainly that people regarded him as a Bolshevik or a pro-German. Thus after a fruitless effort in making people understand

the desirability of international union he left America for England on 19th March 1921.

In the meanwhile, the Mahatmaji had promised Swaraj within a year. Santiniketan had become a centre of non-co-operation. Mr. C. R. Das has joined the Congress and it was resolved that dyarchy should be made a failure. The poet was writing to Andrews to control the spread of this movement to Santiniketan but Andrews had been converted by Mahatma Gandhi and he wrote to the poet in Chicago—"I hope that the spirit of sacrifice and willingness to suffer will grow in strength. It is in fitness of things that Mahatma Gandhi should call up the immense power of the meek that has been waiting in the heart of the destitute and insulted humanity of India. The destiny of India has chosen for its ally the power of soul and not that of muscle. And she is to raise the history of man from the muddy level of physical conflict to a higher level of moral attitude". But the poet could not in any way harmonise himself with the non-co-operation movement.

Upon returning to England he again went to France, then to Strassburg, Alsace-Lorraine, Geneva, Germany. Here he had the most enthusiastic reception in Germany from where he went to Sweden and again he came back to Germany. He made further lecture tours in Vienna and France in all of which place he was well-received. People in all these places had already become acquainted with his works and therefore spontaneously joined in giving hilarious reception to him wherever he went.

After a stay of about fourteen months he returned to India in July 1921. He wrote an article called *Śikṣār Milan* in which he tried to propound the faults of nationalism and the way of escaping its evils through education. True education must emancipate us from egotism or nationality. In this article he almost openly challenged the non-co-operation creed of Mahatma Gandhi. In a series of other lectures he began to preach the same ideal. The novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, who was then a non-co-operator, opposed Rabindranath in an article called *Śikṣār Virodha* and Rabindranath further opposed him in another article called *Satyer Āhvāne*. In the meanwhile the festivity of *Varṣā-maṅgala* was performed and Rabindranath was given a reception at the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad under the presidentship of M. M. Haraprasad Shastri. In the meanwhile Mahatma Gandhi came to Calcutta and met Rabindranath and had a long discussion with him and it seems neither could convince the other. But the followers of Mahatma Gandhi understanding that the burning of foreign clothes was repugnant to Rabindranath collected heaps of foreign clothes and had a bonfire in the yards of Rabindranath's house. From this time Rabindranath became practically disconnected from

the political movements of the country, and he engaged himself in the work of the Āśrama and his literary activities. A young man named L. K. Elmhurst, a Cambridge Graduate, who had formed acquaintance with the Poet in America, became interested in his scheme of village reconstruction. Elmhurst came to Santiniketan with a promise of Rs. 50,000/- a year from his friend Mrs. Stret. Thus began the work of village reconstruction in Santiniketan. Prof. Sylvain Levi came from France as a teacher in Santiniketan in November 1921. He used to lecture regularly and the poet was present in his lectures and Chinese and Tibetan began to be taught at this time. At this time a society was formed in France called L'Ami de l'Orient. This Society made a presentation of books in the Visvabharati Library and Mr. Sridhar Rana, a merchant of Cutch, resident of France, who died at this time, made a gift of his library to Santiniketan. Some donations were also received from outside and Rabindranath himself had donated Rs. 18,000/-.

In the year 1921, on the occasion of the 7th Pausa ceremony, the Visvabharati was established with a formal constitution under the presidentship of Dr. B. N. Seal. The poet was now thinking of handing over the Visvabharati to the public. He wrote at this time a drama called *Muktadhārā* which had more or less the tune of the *Prāyaścitta*. In the meanwhile, political agitation in the country was reaching a high water level. There was a split between the Hindu and the Muslims and the Bardouli Satyagraha movement was undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi. Shortly after this there was a Chowrichowra tragedy in which the Police Station at Chowrichowra was attacked by crowds and many police officers were killed. Shortly after this Mahatma Gandhi was sent to prison for six years. Rabindranath at this time published a letter in the *Bengalee Patrika*, in which he said that he believed in the efficacy of *Ahimsā* as the means of overcoming the congregated physical force on which the political power in all countries mainly rest. But this spirit of *Ahimsā* must spring spontaneously from the heart. No doubt, to a strong compulsion of desire for some external result, men may repress their habitual inclination for a limited time. But when immense multitudes of men are concerned, and when a period of struggle is prolonged, it seldom becomes possible that men should be able to repress the actions of animosities. The conditions of South Africa are not exactly the same as in India. He, therefore, would not believe in the doctrine that would try to translate a moral force into a blind physical force.

Being disengaged from political and other activities the poet devoted himself to his own literary works and the work of reconstruction of the Visvabharati. Elmhurst was at this time engaged in work of rural

reconstruction in Surul. In August 1922, Levi left Santiniketan for his own country. In the meanwhile, the poet was preparing for staging *Śārodatsava* and came to Calcutta for the purpose with his Santiniketan party of boys and girls.

Shortly after this, Rabindranath went out on tour to Bombay, Madras and Ceylon. In Poona, he delivered a lecture on Indian renaissance. He explained here the purpose and the meaning of Visvabharati as a University which would help India's mind to concentrate and to be fully conscious of itself ; free to seek the truth and make this truth its own whenever found ; to judge by its own standard ; give expression to its own genius and offer its wisdoms to the guests who come from other parts of the world. From Poona Rabindranath went to Mysore at the invitation of the Mysore University. In Mylapore in Madras he delivered a lecture on the vision of Indian history and the next day a lecture on the spirit of modern times. From Madras he went to Coimbatore and delivered two lectures on the vision of Indian history and Eastern Universities. After travelling in various places in Madras he went to Ceylon and delivered a number of lectures in various localities of Ceylon.

From there he returned to India and went to Travancore. After travelling in various places he came to Madras and delivered a lecture at the United Women's College. Though his lectures were in most of these places based on the ticket system of admission, yet he had received, but little money by his lectures. From Madras he came to Bombay and from there to Sabarmati to see the Institution and from there he returned to Calcutta.

In the meanwhile professor Winternitz had arrived in Santiniketan and Lord Lytton paid a visit to the place. Shortly after this, the poet started for a tour in Western India to preach the message of his Visva-Bharati. He first went to Benares. From there he went to Lucknow. From Lucknow to Bombay ; from Bombay to Ahmedabad, from there to Karachi, from there to Porbunder and then returned to Santiniketan.

Sir Ratan Tatta had at this time given Rs. 25,000/- for building a residence for teachers of Santiniketan.

At this time (1923) he wrote his drama called *Raktakaravī*. He was at this time writing many songs. In April 1923, he started the Visva-Bharati Quarterly. He delivered at this time a lecture in Calcutta, in which speaking of Bankim Chandra he said that a poet was in his greatest height, not where he leaves a message, but where he creates true art and produces joy.

The poet had kept himself aloof from all political movements, but he had not ceased from expressing his views at different time of the living problems of the day. There was a hot controversy at this time of the

problem of Council entry ; Rabindranath expressed his views that it was but natural that different persons should hold different views over any programme of action, but though there may be differences of opinion this ought not to produce any heat ; those who wanted to enter the Council should be allowed to do so, but no one ought to enter the Council merely for wrecking it. He also held the view that as the Moslems can always give a united front, so, it was also desirable that the Hindus should form themselves in a league in an institution like the Hindu Mahasabha. Any method of patch work union between the Hindus and the Muslims like that of the Hindus joining the Khelafat movement cannot succeed. The true basis of Union is economical. This ought to be brought home, both to the Hindus and the Moslems.

The poet was at this time not very fertile in his literary activities. He was staging *Raktakaravī* and writing a small drama called *Ratha-yātrā*. Pearson died at this time (1923) through an accident in Italy. The Poet at this time made a short tour in Western India and returned to Santiniketan. At this time the poet started for China as many of his friends there were anxious to receive him. He was invited by a society in China and he was anxious to preach the message of Visvabharati there. His passage expenses were borne by the Pekin University. On the way he had reception in Burma, Penang, Malay and Sanghai. He was given a special reception by the American Society in China. He had also enthusiastic receptions in Pekin. But it cannot be denied that young China, which regarded Rabindranath as a conservative in thought, did not appreciate him much. But Dr. Huhsi, leader of modern China, had a long talk with Rabindranath and this did much in dispelling the cloud that had accumulated. He had reception in China from various societies and after a short stay there he went to Japan. From there he returned to India in July 1924. On returning to India he found that he had an invitation from South America. After staying for two months in India he started for South America on 19th September 1924. But he had illness on the way which continued even after his arrival in South America. He could not therefore make much of his visit to South America and could not ultimately accept the invitation of Peru. But Peruvians were glad to forego passage expenses that they had given. While in Buneys Ayres he received an invitation from Italy, he arrived in the port of Genoa in January 1925. From there he went to Milan and spoke there before a large gathering. From there he went to Turung and from there to Venice, and from Venice to Padua. But though he was received with much enthusiasm by many of his Italian admirers, the official circle was rather cold to him,

He returned to India on the 17th February 1925. Mr. Elmhurst, who had accompanied the poet to South Africa as his secretary, returned to England and married the rich peeress Mrs. Whitely Straight and his connection with Bolepur became more intimate though he started an ideal school in England. There came in the meanwhile Mahatma Gandhi to Bolepur. But though most of the members of Bolepur had taken to Mahatmaji's creed yet even long conversations with Mahatmaji could not convert Tagore to his views. On the other hand where in a lecture Sir P. C. Roy had slightly attacked Dr. B. N. Seal and Rabindranath for their not being able to subscribe to Mahatma Gandhi's views, Rabindranath came out in strong protest against the doctrine of *Carkā*. He openly declared that to regard *Carkā* as the way to Swaraj was but a way of putting our reason to slumber. He also pointed out that it was obviously wrong to put up before all that swaraj was obtainable either by *Carkā* or by non-co-operation within a short time. It could be believed only by men whose reason had been blunted. It was like the belief that this or that particular ascetic can turn iron into gold. He said it very openly and clearly that *Carkā* as a cottage industry was good, but that it was as little connected with Swaraj as the North Pole was with the South Pole. Swaraj was the hardest thing that one could attain, and could be attained only by moral means. At this time on the occasion of the sixtieth birth-day of Romain Rolland, he wrote a letter of congratulation in which he strongly protested against the machine civilisation of the day which tyrannised over the helpless men of all countries. In the meanwhile contact of Visbabharati with the Western countries were kept continuous. Sylvain Lévi was the first to come to Santiniketan in 1921-22. Then came Prof. Winternitz and Prof. Lesny in 1922-23. Sten Konow came in '924-25 and Formichi came in 1925. Within a few months of this, the Italian Government sent Prof. Tucci to Santiniketan. The invitation of Formichi to Santiniketan had given great satisfaction to Mussolini who sent through Tucci a large collection of Italian books, and Rabindranath accepted it with a telegram expressing his gratefulness. Shortly after the arrival of Formichi Lord Lytton came to visit the Santiniketan in 1925. When the first philosophical Congress of India was started Rabindranath was made the President.

Dwijendranath Tagore, the eldest brother of Rabindranath, died in 1926 in his eighty-ninth year. Shortly after this Rabindranath, Formichi and Tucci went to Dacca on a lecture-invitation. There under the auspices of various societies and the University of Dacca, he gave a number of lectures. From Dacca he went to Mymensingh and there a great reception was given to him by the Mymensingh public. After some

lectures in Mymensingh he started for Comilla, from there he went to Agartola, from there he came to Chandpur and then he returned to Santiniketan. Shortly after his arrival in Santiniketan, a drama called *Naṭir Pūjā* was staged.

On the 12th May 1926 Rabindranath again started for Italy on his own initiative. It was suggested in the papers that Rabindranath was going to Italy on the invitation of the Italian Government. But Rabindranath strongly repudiated the suggestion. It may be remembered that on previous occasion his lectures had not pleased the Fascists and the official circle had been cold to him. But situation was much eased when Prof. Formichi, a favourite of Mussolini, was invited to Santiniketan and on this occasion he had received a presentation of books from Mussolini and Tucci had been sent to Santiniketan. Formichi now arranged the passage expenses of the poet from Italy. At this time Metionetti, an opponent of the Fascists had suddenly disappeared and Fascists had fallen in disfavour with the ordinary people, and Formichi thought that an appreciation of a man like Rabindranath would be profitable to Mussolini. When Rabindranath landed in Naples, he was taken by a special train to Rome and was received by Mussolini as his guest. Rabindranath was very much pleased to see what Fascism had done for Rome. He wrote at this time—"It is for me to study not to criticise from outside. I am glad for this opportunity to see for myself the work of one, he is assuredly a great man and a movement that will certainly be remembered in history". Rabindranath received a unique reception in Italy. He was also welcomed by the University of Rome. At Rome Rabindranath expressed the desire of visiting Croce who was not in good terms with the Fascists. Croce came to Rome and the Philosopher and the poet exchanged their views. Though Rabindranath did not express any views on Fascism, yet he had expressed his great admiration for Mussolini and his individuality. After his tour in Italy he went to Switzerland to meet Romain Rolland. There he learnt of many stories regarding the tyranny of the Fascistic rule. He also learnt that the newspapers had often given a wrong interpretation to what he had said on Fascism and Mussolini. He then wrote a letter to *Manchester Guardian* that all that was published about what he had said about Mussolini and Fascism had been largely exaggerated and twisted. But unfortunately in his letter written to Prof. Formichi at this time, he did not make any reference to these facts. From Villeneuve he went to Zurich, and from there to Vienna. In different places he heard many accusations against Fascism and wrote a long letter against Mussolini and Fascism to Andrews—which was published in *Manchester Guardian*. Prof. Formichi in reply to this wrote that while in Italy he had not separated

himself even for a moment from Tagore and had translated for him whatever appeared in the papers, and that Rabindranath had never said anything against that and had often praised Mussolini. Rabindranath in reply wrote that his appreciation of Mussolini and his hospitality could not mean that he approved of Fascism. From Vienna he went to England and from there he visited the Norwegian countries. Rabindranath's lectures in Berlin were, however, not much appreciated this time. There was philological appreciation of his lectures but few appreciated the content of his lectures. From Berlin he went to Czechoslovakia and again returned to Vienna. From there he came to the Balkans and delivered lectures which were much appreciated. From Yugoslavia he went to Bulgaria, from there he went to Athens, and after visiting Egypt he came back to India on 19th December, 1926.

On coming back to Santiniketan, he staged *Nṭir Pūjā*. At this time his *Naṭarāja* was published. Rabindranath had in the meanwhile left Santiniketan for Konarak. In January 1927 he was invited to preside over the Hindi Literary Conference at Bhagalpur. In this connection he visited a number of native states but could not secure any contribution for Santiniketan from any of these states. At this time he writes in a letter, quoted by his biographer, as follows:—"The Visva-Bharati shows no tenderness in its demands. Yet I do not perceive in the least any sign as to where, in what emptiness it exists. It does not exist certainly in the loyalty of its workers not even in their dreams. In reality the true meaning of Visva-Bharati cannot crystalise in any particular institution. It works in the minds of various peoples of various countries. People do not come forward to help it, because they do not find its reality and truth in our institution. Realisation of the reality of Visva-Bharati is far ahead, but yet the beggary of its material aspect is continually inflicting me. The burden of sorrow is entirely in my shoulders. I have no power to draw any one near me continually because from the inner side I am isolate. Many would have joined in my work, if they could get me with them. But I have such a lack of sociability that they cannot get me but get only the work. This becomes a pure burden—so they all fly away one by one. Only my exit is closed." During his travels he came across Thompson's *Life of Rabindranath* and in a number of letters he expressed his disapproval for this work. He was at this time writing poems which found their place in the collection—*Parīṣeṣa* and *Banabāñī*. In July 1927 the poet and his party started for their tour in Java, Bali, Sumatra and other places and returned to his country after a tour for 3 months and a half.

Before leaving the country for Java Rabindranath had written an article called *Sāhityer Dhārma*. In this article he had stated that the

creation of literature was a surplus creation and not of utility. This article was severely criticised by many, such as Dr. Nares Chandra Sen, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and others. The wave of this criticism was still there when Rabindranath returned to this country and he had written a very strong letter to Dr. Nares Chandra Sen. His novel *Tin-puruṣa* had become ready for the press before he left for the Eastern Islands and it was being serially published in the *Vicitrā*. Its name was later on changed into *Yogāyoga*. He revised also *Naṭarāja* and changed its name to *Ṛturaṅga*. In the meanwhile he was invited to Oxford to deliver the Hibbert Lectures.

He reached Colombo for starting for England on the 31st May 1928. He had passed through Madras and had been a guest of Mrs. Besant in Adyar and had also gone to Pondicherry to meet Mr. Aurobinda Ghosh. He was deeply impressed by the sanctified appearance of Aurobinda. But in the end his health became so bad that he had to give up the idea of going to England on this occasion. At the time of his sojourn to south India he had started writing his novel *Seṣer Kavītā*. Lord Irwin came to visit Santiniketan in April 1928. At this time he was writing his *Mahuyā*.

In 1929 the National Council of Education of Canada was inviting a conference at Vanquober, and Rabindranath was invited as a delegate for India. The poet had refused the invitation of Canada on account of the Immigration Act but on this occasion he accepted their invitation. He was accompanied by Prof. Tucker and Apurva Kumar Chanda, the latter being his Secretary. The poet passed via Pacific and Japan. His lectures at the Conference were well appreciated by the people. From Vanquever he went to Los Angeles and gave some lectures at the Universities. In the meanwhile he had lost his passport and was trying to get a fresh pass port at Los Angeles. In the passport office he was asked a very curious question as to whether he was literate or illiterate, whether he had money or not. At this the poet decided not to enter America and he returned to Japan.

After staying about a month in Japan he returned to India. In 1929 he wrote his *Rājā O Rānī* as *Tapatī* and had it staged at his house at Jorasanko and he himself appeared in the role of Vikrama at the age of 67. In the meanwhile he was invited to deliver lectures at Baroda. He had been elected President of the *Sāhitya Sammelan* at Bhowanipore, Calcutta but in the end no news of him was available for he was at the time travelling in Baroda quite oblivious of his engagement at Calcutta. He was also delivering lectures on different occasions at the Rabindra-Parīṣad Society at the Presidency College. Elmhurst and his wife had come when festivities were going on at Sriniketan but such was the financial condition

at the time that inspite of the strong agitation of the non-co-operation movement at the time the Governor of Bengal Sir Stanley Jackson was invited to open the ceremony and he made a capital grant of Rs. 5,000 and an annual grant of Rs. 3,000 for 3 years. The event had invited some criticism.

The Poet started for Europe again with two main purposes in view to deliver the Hibbert lectures and to exhibit his paintings. For some time past he had been devoting his time more to painting than to writing poetry. He first went to Paris and had an exhibition of his paintings there which elicited the praise of many connoisseur. He passed on to England and spent some time with Quakers and delivered lectures at their meetings and tried to impress the fact that the English in their Government of India had been behaving more as a mechanised institution than as human beings entrusted with the good Government of a country and tied with them in ties of humanity and friendship.. The true solution lies in the attainment of a unity between the best minds of India and England. They alone can have the true vision which can inspire both the governed and the governing classes with the ideals of friendship and humanity which alone can result in an abiding relation between the two countries. His speeches and talks had produced such a stir that it was arranged that a deputation should await upon Government for a special consideration of the affairs of India. He delivered his Hibbert lectures on the *Religion of Man*. These lectures were largely attended appreciated and filled the people with great enthusiasm. He had made some exhibitions of the people with great enthusiasm. He had made some exhibitions of his paintings in England also. From there he passed on to Germany and other important countries of the Continent and made exhibitions of his paintings. Everywhere he was greeted and cheered and had the best hospitality and the homage of every country through which he passed and where he stayed.

From the continent he passed on to Russia and had an exhibition of his pictures there. He spent his time mostly in studying the cultural conditions of Russia and he was careful only to speak on cultural side. His impressions about his tour in Russia had been recorded in *Russiyār-Patra*. At this time he left Russia for America but in the meanwhile the political condition in India had become very serious and Lord Irwin had declared that Indian problems will be discussed in a round-table conference in England. The members of course were not elected for the only organisation of election, the Congress, had already been gagged by ordinances. The members would then be only those nominated by the Government. Mahatma Gandhi was invited but he had made certain conditions which the Government was not prepared to accept. Rabindranath published a

letter in the Spectator expressing his hope that it might be possible for Mahatma Gandhi to attend the Conference and that some good might come out and crystallise through mutual co-operation.

In America he had fallen ill and on this excuse he practically had little opportunity of delivering lectures anywhere. People were rather afraid to hear what he might say about his experience in Russia or about the nature of British rule in India. He had plenty of social engagements attended mostly by celebrities other than in the cultural sphere. There were businessmen and merchants, industrialists and lawyers but seldom any poet or artist. He however made an exhibition of his paintings and these were introduced by A. Coomarswamy. After a short time he returned from America to England. He had arranged there a committee for raising subscriptions for the Santiniketan. It does not seem however that he could render any practical assistance to the deliberations of the Round-table Conference. We do not also understand why he himself being on the spot was not invited by the British Government to act as a member in the Round-table Conference. He however returned to India in February 1931.

At this time in 1931 the poet wrote a work called *Gītugucha* which was staged at the New Empire, Calcutta under the name *Nabīn*. It was a peculiar kind of opera describing the advent of spring and its farewell. It is full of songs and dances. He was now writing his poems that were later on collected in *Parīṣeṣ*. His *Russiyār Ciṭhi* was published at this time and his *Patra-dhārā* was being published. In the meanwhile there was a flood and famine in Bengal and a musical soiree was arranged in which a small drama called *Śiṣu-tīrtha* which found its expressions in songs and dance and tableaux was staged for the relief of the famine-stricken people. In the meanwhile Dr. S. N. Das Gupta together with the Pundits of the Sanskrit College gave a reception to the poet and gave him the honourary title of *Kavi-Sārvabhauma* after the fashion of old times. At this time again there was a shooting case at the Hijli Detention Camp where some of the prisoners were shot by the guards. Rabindranath wrote a strong protest against it. The poet had reached his 70th year and a great reception was arranged for him at the Town Hall, Calcutta, which was unique of its kind. The *Golden Book of Tagore* was written on this occasion by various writers of the East and the West. The student community gave him a reception at the Senate House and a tableau-drama called *Sāpamocana* was staged. In the meanwhile Mahatmaji had returned from England after the Round-Table Conference and was immediately arrested when the festivities in connection with the reception was going on. The festivities were stopped and Rabindranath sent a cable to the Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald to the following effect—"The sensa-

tional policy of indiscriminate repression being followed by Indian Government starting with the imprisonment of Mahatmaji is most unfortunate causing permanent alienation of our people from yours making it extremely difficult for us to co-operate with your representations for peaceful political adjustment." Shortly after this there was an exhibition of his paintings at the Art School, Calcutta.

In April 1932 the poet decided to start for Persia by Aeroplane. He passed through Bushire, Shiraj (the birthplace of Hafiz and Sadi), Ispahan, Teheran and Baghdad and was every where accorded warm welcome and reception. He returned to Calcutta on 3rd June 1932.

At this time the old inspiration which had remained more or less suspended for a long time again came back to him and he made new experiments with metre in his two collection of poems, *Parīṣeṣ* and *Punaśca*. He was passing through great financial stringency and his grandson Nitindra was lying in deathbed in Germany. He was, however, very prolific at this time in his letters, the study of which is indispensable for forming the notion of his complex personality. In the meanwhile the Calcutta University had appointed him the Kamala lecturer and he was also made the professor of Bengali language and literature on an annual salary of Rs. 5,000/- for two years and it was arranged that he would deliver a few lectures every year. He had from his early days criticised the educational system of the Calcutta University and that he should have accepted a salaried post under the same University had given a rude shock to many of his admirers. He was given a special reception by the Calcutta University at this time. He wrote a new drama which was rather a revised composition of his older drama *Ratha-yātrā* on the occasion of the birthday celebration of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. In the meanwhile, Mahatma Gandhi started his fasting in 1932. The day previous to his starting the fast Rabindranath wrote to him in the following terms,—“It is worth sacrificing precious life for the sake of India's unity and her social integrity. Though we cannot anticipate what effect it may have upon our rulers who may not understand its immense importance for our people, we feel certain that the supreme appeal of such self-offering to the conscience of our own countrymen will not callously allow such national tragedy to reach its extreme length. Our sorrowing hearts will follow your sublime penance. With reverence and love.” Later on he started to see Mahatmaji in Bombay. Soon after this he published his novel—*Dui Bon*. It was dedicated to Sir P. C. Roy on the occasion of his 70th Birthday at the celebration of which the poet presided. About the year 1933 he published two other novels *Mālañca* and *Bāṃṣari*. In 1933 also he published two other dramas *Tāser Deś* and *Caṇḍālikā*. In November 1933 the poet started for Bombay where

a great reception was given to him where his *Sāpamocan* and *Taser Deś* were staged. The Nizam of Hyderabad had donated one lac of rupees to the Visva-Bharati for the furtherance of Islamic studies and the poet went from Bombay to Hyderabad where he met the Nizam. Shortly after this the poet started for Ceylon with the idea of collecting money for Santiniketan but practically no financial help could be secured from Ceylon, but he was however given a warm reception in Ceylon and the play that was staged here was much attended and appreciated.

Later on after his return to Santiniketan he started for Madras with his party of boys and girls of Santiniketan. He delivered lectures and staged his drama but not to much effect so far as financial hopes were concerned. He had hoped to secure Rs. 50,000/- from Madras but he could not collect even Rs. 5,000/-. On his way back he was the guest of the Maharani of Vizianagram who gave him a few thousand rupees. After returning from Madras he went again to Benares to open a Montessori School of the Theosophists. He wrote at this time a work called *Cār Adhyāy*.

In February 1935, the poet went to Benares and Allahabad and delivered lectures there. From there he went to Lucknow and Delhi with the intention of collecting money for Santiniketan. At this time his collection of poems called *Śeṣ Saptak* was published. His *Bīthikā* was also published at this time. He was now 74 years of age.

Shortly after there was a protest meeting against the Communal Award at the Town Hall and Rabindranath presided over it. We may remember in this connection that both the Calcutta and the Dacca Universities had awarded him a honorary D.Litt. In 1936 his *Syāmālī* was published and also his travel-diary to Japan and Persia, and his *Chanda*, *Nṛtya-Nāṭya Citrāṅgadā*, *Patrapuṭ*, *Sikṣār Dhārā*, *Sāhityer Pathe*, *Pāscatya Bhramaṇ* and *Prāktanī* were published. In 1937 he published *Khāpchādā*, *Kālāntar*, *Se* (a story), *Chadār Chabi* (a poem) and *Viśva-paricaya* (an introductory book on science). In 1938 he published *Prāntik* (poems), *Caṇḍālīkā Nṛtya Nāṭya*, *Pathe O Pather Prānte*, *Seṃjuti* (poems), *Patra-dhārā* and *Bāṅglā Bhāṣār Paricay*. In 1939 he published *Prahāsini*, *Ākāśa-pradīpa*, *Syāmā*, (opera), *Pather Sañcay* (essays). His collection of works called *Rabīndra-Racanāvalī* started publication in 1939. In 1940 he published *Navajātaka* (poems) *Chelebelā* (autobiographical sketch of early life), *Tin Saṅgī* (stories) and *Rogaśayyay* (poems). In 1941 he published *Ārogya* (poems), *Janmadīne* (poems), *Sabhyatār Saṅkaṭ* (an essay), *Galpa-svalpa*, *Āśramer Rūpa O Bikāś* (essay). He died on 22nd Śrāvan, 1348 B.S., and his *Chadā* and *Śeṣ Lekhā* were published after his death. Since then his collection of works are being published. During these days, the poet had been frequently

ill. The third war had broken out and difficulties of communication and his ill-health prevented him from making any long journeys or in participating in the deliberations of big meetings.

If we take a bird's-eye view of the long story of his life, we find in him the trace of a dual personality. On the one hand he had the common frailties of great men viz., the desire for fame, sensitiveness to criticism. But on the other side there was the super-man that was always anxious for creative work and self-expression in every domain of life. He started as a poet but he transcended the limits and entered into the domains of the poetry of line and colours. His passion for dancing, music and histrionic art was no less than his passion for poetry. He was a born story-teller and he would not be satisfied only with poetry but he wrote best short stories and novels of exceptional merit. The idea of the Visva-Bharati, of the fraternity of humanity and unification of human culture, past and present, of all countries, and his ambition, that his own institution will give a concrete form to this ideal, had almost obsessed him in the later period of his life. He was not tired in making fruitless journeys in different parts of his own country and in foreign lands for collecting money for his institution. He realised in his mind that this programme of work belonged to the practical field and depended on many contingent circumstances over which he had no control. People in the East and the West failed to identify themselves in sympathy with his Scheme of Visva-Bharati and its possible fructification through his institution. Their apathy in this direction was often interpreted by him as an apathy to himself. Herein he was wrong, for no Poet had in his life-time had received such universal appreciation and honours all over the world as he did. He sometimes seemed to forget that the true vocation of a poet is to create joy and new ideas but it was no part of a poet to give a practical and durable form to any ideal. From his own criticisms we know that he thought that the final gift of a poet was to create joy. A poet need not be a prophet nor a practical worker, yet he shouldered these two great tasks and it is but natural that he should meet with dubious success. In politics also we find the same thing. He gave political ideas but he was not a practical politician. A practical politician wants to attain political advantages of the moment by any means whatsoever, but the political thinker strives after an ideal which is unattainable by practice. Similarly in the field of society and education he was a social thinker and discoveror of high types of educational ideas but he was not actually a social reformer or social worker. We cannot also say that if we judge by fruits his Santiniketan School or the Visva-Bharati has been able to produce alumni who could be regarded as representatives of his ideal. In theory he preached separation from the

University but in practice he affiliated his school with the Calcutta University and himself accepted a chair at the Calcutta University. His Vidyā-bhavan has not been able to publish yet any work of ripe scholarship. He had not also the genius to choose the right sort of men for such an institution. He was essentially a poet and a subjectivist and therefore failed in practical campaigns.

In conversation he was genial, jolly and mirthful but thoroughly inaccessible. It was difficult for any one to think of him as a dear friend though people would love and admire him for his sparkling genius. His mind was always responsive, always genial and fresh and there are more friends and real admirers of him in the feminine sex than among men. With all his liberality he could seldom stand logical criticism. In his poems he often transcended the ordinary plane of life, but as he himself admitted, he did not stay long in that plane. The versatility of his genius was unique and incomparable and nowhere we think was genius ever wedded with such indefatigable industry, as in his case. All told, his personality offers us a picture that is unique in human history.
